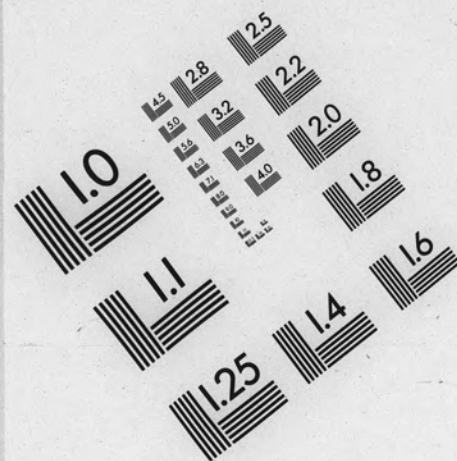


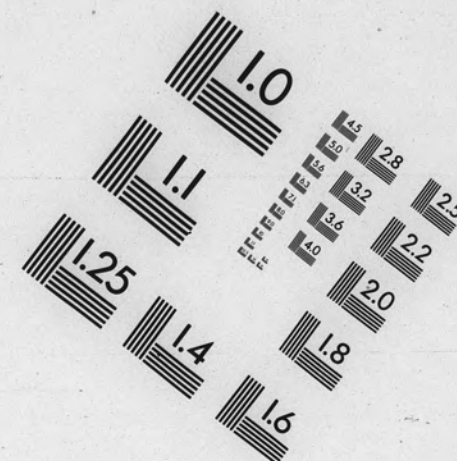
Journal, 1950.



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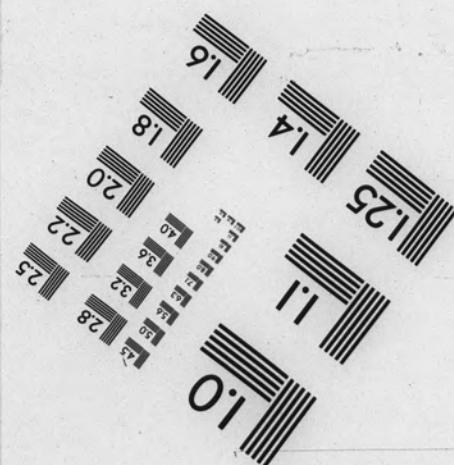
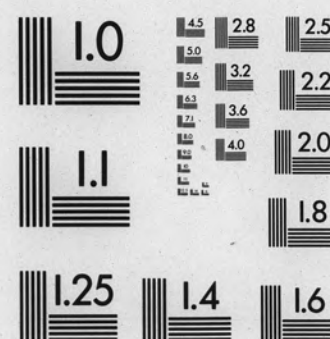
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Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
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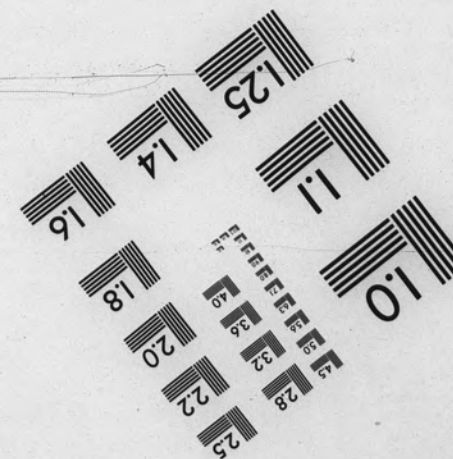
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4001

THE JOURNAL OF FRANCOIS MIGNON

- 1950 -

with folders covering letters from
friends

COOP

4002

January 1st, 1950. (Sunday).
I suppose all the negroes say the weather of each of the first 12 days of the year determines what the dominant weather will be in the 12 months of the year.

Memorandum:

The negroes say the weather of each of the first 12 days of the year determines what the dominant weather will be in the 12 months of the year.

January, 1950, I take it, is going to be wet, for it began a slow gentle rain about 5 o'clock this morning and has kept going along steadily ever since. Nothing could be better for the new camellias on Arenbourg, for the temperature is mild and the moisture will eliminate all air pockets about the roots of the newly transplanted things and some of them may even put out blossoms during the current month.

The ceiling was low all day Saturday, with the humidity high but no rain. After penning you a few lines, I sat for a pleasant hour at my desk, all lights out, contemplating the world and the White Garden where the sun dial stood out impressively, for the cloud coverage was thin and the moon was big and round behind the diffracting gauze. Occasionally a fan tail moved lazily in darkness just before me where the aquarium spans the row of window panes. On the far side of the window, Grandpa sat motionless on the birds' buffet on the level with the aquatic doings.

At peace with the world, I was on the point of calling it the end and the beginning of a year, when a darker shadow slit the bamboo hedge at the far end of the garden. One husky figure, a second, a third, a fourth, and all equally stalwart. The honkey-tonk had closed and the Dark Duke, son frere, son beau-frere and le petit roi, were crossing the greensward. It was silent and impressive, and just to intensify it, as they reached the gallery, the door silently swung wide, ghostly enough to be noticed by the dark hosts, even though the house was without lights. I know not if they had been operating on credit or if, in spite of the past couple of weeks of vacation, they had somehow obtained some money. But however that may be, they had secured a bottle of wine when the "poor man's club" had closed, and were bringing it by to drink a toast to the new year with me. They remained a half hour, perhaps, and then were gone. It was a pleasant termination and beginning, and sleep was sweet in the wake.

4003

On Sunday mornings I can never find any weather reports for the Gulf area, and so I can only guess that rainy weather may continue for another day or so. Naturally the rains and resulting puddles discouraged pilgrims and I wasn't too dry when I responded to an invitation to an 11 o'clock dinner across the fence.

I suppose all the Henrys or most of them, departed for South Louisiana before noon. Madam Regard is being dropped off at Mansura and Pat goes on to L. S. U., while J. A. and Celeste and probably Paynie and Frances, are scheduled to dine at the Baton Rouge Country Club tonight with the General and Mrs. General. Tomorrow they go on to New Orleans for the game. Knowing perfectly well that J. A. never could sit still long enough, or stir up sufficient interest in any kind of a football game to make him "stay put" and that Celeste is as much interested in a football game as Grandpa, I can only ponder on the impulses that impell people to go flying up and down the State in showers of rain. And at the same time, I am wondering if it isn't about time somebody made a survey of the American mania for sports, professional and otherwise, to determine just what small percentage of the people jam the amusement centers really do go for. Here are a couple examples of a case in point, two people having not the vaguest interest in football and yet hell bent for heaven to be among those present. Surely the world would be impressed if shown the total number of Americans attending sporting events in a single season, but what the total would indicate is something else again, and perhaps somebody can some day figure it out for us.

I finished Mrs. Nesbitt's White House Diary. I liked it. Obviously she didn't care much for Alexander Woolcott or Harry Hopkins. I can understand her lack of enthusiasm for Mr. Woolcott, for he really could be bag-ish enough if he felt the impulse, but I must say I never knew anyone of my friends who ever got jabbed at, and his relations with me were both affable and delightful.

I never knew anyone who knew Harry Hopkins except Lyle and he was crazy about him. Mr. Hopkins used to get down to New Orleans quite frequently during the early 1940's. I may have mentioned that Mr. Hopkins was scheduled to spend two weeks at Melrose along about 1943, if I remember correctly. He was to have shared Yucca with me but just before he started for his "off the record" round, an urgent telephone from Washington called him back there, and so far as I know, he never did get back to Louisiana again.

Mme. Aubin-Cocque's grandson mixed whiskey with gasoline with the usual results, but I shall speak of that on the morrow. And so 1950 gets under way and may be kind to you...

4004

Monday, January 2nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to receive such an elegant fat letter in today's post, and may I hasten to thank you a billion times, not only for all the pleasure that it gives me in getting the New Year started off on the right foot, but also for all the labors it represents in a billion different lines of endeavor. A series of interruptions prevented me from quite completing the letter, but I am ever sorry about such deprivation, for that but means I have the promise of additional pleasures awaiting me in my armchair when another day rolls 'round.

Your card reveals that appended to your letter is a communication from La Ellsworth and the A. A. C. form. How nice that this has been effected and because of your thoughtfulness, I shall have a full month to study the item before I harangue the Alexandria outfit. But getting back to Christmas and the New Year.... How well I appreciate all you had to say, and how odd it seems to start off 1950 in Smith Town. But I am hoping that concession enabled you to revel in a measure of rest and relaxation on the following day, and if so, then all the sacrifices are worth while. How nice that L. J. and all were about for Christmas. The blouse sounds perfectly entrancing and it is heartening to know that you could progress from tree to tree in such sympathetic company.

And what a holiday break for you that Moguls in the business world arranged travels at this particular season, for any lessening of pressure at such a time is heavenly in itself, and how well do I know, what with the resulting benefits for me in the form of your elegant communication. Another interruption -- and there have been so many since yesterday. I think I mentioned that a great grandson of Grandpere came to an abrupt end Sunday afternoon. Heading down the road, he had just passed the Melrose gardens when his pick-up truck ran off the road and was blocked from a plunge into the river by a couple of trees on the bank between which it wedged. But the jolt threw Jodey Rocane from the left side of the driver's seat to the right side, his neck

4004

4005

being slashed by the half opened window, and he died sitting there, his cigarette lighter still flaming untouched by the blood that streamed from his throat. It took Parish medical authorities over two hours to get down to pronounce the man dead of natural causes, and during that prolonged interim this gruesome spectacle sat there in the driver's seat, his almost severed head sagging below his chest, almost into his lap, with all the attendant gore all over the place.

First one relative and then another came by to see me with a request that telephone calls be put through, and this, of course, I gladly carried out. Tonight I am still putting through calls to people not remembered in yesterday's excitement.

My friend Bill Jones was one of those who came last night to effect communications, and what with Bill being a college man and quite acquainted with telephones, it was restful to be able to turn the business over to him. I have just learned, as between this paragraph and the foregoing that Bill Jones is tonight sitting in jail, which seems odd, since his half million dollars should have enabled him to provide a bond, but I suppose the color business may be a factor in his present situation. It seems that while he was here making telephone calls on behalf of the Roque family last night, his young son, a minor, borrowed one of the family cars, and succeeded in running down some white woman somewhere or other, - perhaps in town, and so the father has been arrested as responsible for the sort comings of his offspring. Surely 1950 is getting off at a bang for Cane River mulattoes this year. His estate may be a factor in his present situation.

But returning to your letter, how charming that you should be able to set me straight about the Monticello house of William Bache. I take it this must have been another grandson of Benjamin Franklin, since the one who was with the old man in France was usually referred to as "benny", although I suppose it might have been the same individual. And how charming that you should have run up on Mr. Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame. The volume I read didn't do much about the Charlottesville neighborhood, and I am delighted to have this additional information you mention about the explorer.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in for a moment this noon to extend season's greetings. She said that she and Dr. Coombs were at some social function the other night and chanced to meet a Mrs. Baker who asked them if they had ever chanced to be down this way and if they had ever met that mulatto who presided over the destinies of the place since Miss Cammie's death. She said she had been down this way early in November and had been surprised to see the mulatto's picture in the Picayune, in an article about Melrose, the mulatto gazing at a portrait of his grandfather. I think she must be the bag who found such a splendid likeness in the planter and mulatto son portrait, although at the time I thought she had confused me with the planter, not the son. La Baker really must be wonderful, and is that proof that sometimes I

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4006

Tuesday, January 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your grand New Year's letter to hand in this morning's post, together with the booklet covering the American Art Council.

Today's message and yesterday's embraced the grandest promise of felicity for the New Year, and by a stroke of good luck, by two meandering secretaries passed this way at different hours, both yesterday and today, so that I had the unusual happiness of being able to run through both communications twice, - a delight which is seldom mine, but a circumstance that I shall remember with ever so much gratitude throughout the entire year.

I want to thank you for your suggestion regarding a communication directly to the presiding diety of the A.A. R.C. I shall take a clipping from the Alexandria paper of the 10th, if the coverage is any good, and attach it to a letter for the director of that organization, and I have no doubt that the Council will approve the idea and may be counted on to push the D. A. R. ladies along in the right direction, especially when the project is brought up for consideration as a national undertaking. How pleasant it is to have you working in such a vigorous and helpful way in putting this business over. It is always so much fun when we can attempt such things together.

And may I thank you for acquainting me with so many interesting particular about doings in the book world. I am glad to know that Mrs. Chesnut's Diary From Dixie has been re-issued. I am hoping this new edition may include additional material, for, as you may recall, much she jotted down never found its way to print because of personal episodes wherein many an associate, politician, etc., during the struggle did not appear in a very favorable light. What with all the years that have elapsed, it would seem as though such data should now be set forth, not so much to reveal unpleasant roles played by certain people as in order to provide everyone in this day and age with a better understanding of the people and times which Mrs. Chesnut knew so intimately from Charleston to Richmond and back again.

I am glad the slant on The Unhurried Years was pleasant although brief. I don't know the volume about the Alabama plantation you mention. We ought to eventually investigate it, don't you think.

3004

4007

During the holiday rush, I held up any returns of Reading Books to the New Orleans Public Library, thinking everyone in the Post Office Department from here to there had enough to do with other mail without bothering with Talking Books. I accordingly find myself at the moment with something or other about China which probably would not be read if I had something more appealing. I think the title of the book is "Donald of China" and is by Sells or some such name. Frankly I never head of Donal before but he seems to have been an important figure in the China of from 1900 to the present. An Australian newspaper man who never learned Chinese, he had lots of friends in various political groups and is said to have exerted unusual skill in pulling wires. His first claim to distinction was his scoop that told the world and the Japanese military machine just where the Russian Fleet was stationed in 1904 or 1905, and thus made its destruction possible. In view of the arrogance that steadily mounted in Japanese quarters following that event, I wouldn't think the revelation that made their rise to power possible would be anything to be particularly proud of, but then I never did understand the press very well anyway, especially when it paid a reporter to sacrifice anybody or anything for a scoop.

I am glad you mentioned the Lowell Thomas broadcast about the capture of the animal on Ferdinand Street, a news-cast I had missed. Sometimes I hear Lowell Thomas and sometimes I don't. His broadcast is at 5:45 in this area, and frequently we find ourselves at supper at that hour. I never find old Kaltenborne any more and would you know if Elmer Davis is doing business any more, for I can't find him either, although frankly, I haven't searched very hard.

It is interesting that in the same mail with your letter comes one from Cousin Lucy wherein she refers to the same absence from the mails that you remarked upon. In both cases it isn't personal animosity but lack of time and memory, I think, especially as the bottle seems to make such big demands on la bag's time these days. A card from Miss Kate today remarks how pleased she was to have a letter from la Grignan, saying how delighted she was to have J. and Celeste with her on Christmas day. That is pretty funny, unless one wants to concede that she was indeed telling the truth, what with all the pleasure she derived in denouncing them up and down, in and out, wrong side around and other end to. But I shall make no reference to such a statement when writing to Miss Kate, for she obviously still falls for the same old line that in the past fooled so many. No sign of the football enthusiasts from the Sugar Bowl. A big wake tonight for Jodey Rocque, and the threat of a freeze before morning. So much for local doings, and now little old Yucca and I must get to the Tender Leaf tea table....

8004

4008

Wednesday, January 4th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A chill, sprinkly day with the promise of a hard freeze tonight, - the one, I reckon, which didn't develope last night.

But the freeze may come or not as it pleases, for the Arenbourg children are all bundled up in some fine pajamas, and no matter which way the thermometer goes, they will be as snug as bugs in rugs. I wasn't quite so dry or snug when I was warpping them up, but back at Yucca, a quick change and I, too, was prepared for whatever turned up.

Frankly, I counted on seeing no one today, but Ora came down this afternoon, bringing with her two Mrs. Matesons, senior and daughter-in-law. The elder is a good friend of Miss Lucy Morgan, and had made the trip to Louisiana on two counts, she said, - to visit her son and daughter in law and to carry out Miss Lucy's request; that she make a pilgrimage to Melrose, before returning to Pennland. I believe the lady's home is somewhere in Michigan, but I take it she spends much time in North Carolina. She seemed delighted with her tour, in spite of the weather.

Ora and I didn't get much chance to chat, but we shall get caught up at some other sitting. She said she saw Pat and the General at the Monteleon Hotel in New Orleans and was so glad to be able to say Howdy. Perhaps there is the key or one of them for the popularity of football games.

I got a little reading done last night but not of much account, - that Donald of China business. The biographer of Mr. Donald sets forth Sun-Yet-Sen, or however the name of the first President of China's name is spelled, as unbelievably visionary and impracticable, - to the point of a simplicity bordering on foolishness. For example, he quotes Dr. Sun as saying, following his rise to power, following the Manchus, that no foreign loan was needed for Chinese currency since the Government could publish as much paper money as might be needed, and when that was worn out, they could publish more from time to time as more was required.

This reminded me of that list somebody made along about Christmas time of the ten people of 1900 to 1950 who were the greatest or made the greatest impression during the first half century. As I recall Nos. 1, 2, and 3 were Asiatics, Gandhi, Lenine and Sun-Yet-Sen, with Mrs. Roosevelt as next in line, as I recall. I don't recall who contrived the list, but it was an interesting one. Some of the others included Dr. Einstein, Dr. Schrieber, F. D. R., and I have forgotten the rest.

4009

I don't recall if I mentioned yesterday that I had a telephone from Mrs. Holloman who told me the pictures, snapped of Emanuel Prudhomme (at Uncle Phanor's) last week did not come out suitably for reproduction. I still don't understand why that portrait could have been removed from the wall for photographing, since we were permitted to touch the thing and it certainly wasn't nailed up. Perhaps we shall be able to get it at another go-round. Obviously there is no accounting for a Prudhomme whim, and I suppose they would drop dead if they knew Mrs. Holloman's photographer cost her ten dollars for the trip which produced nothing. Lucky that the Hollomans have enough money if they have to bump into too many Prudhommies in the course of their literary pursuits. I may have mentioned that Mrs. Holloman's husband is of White, Holloman and White, the two Whites being Mrs. and's late father and her brother.

And while I think of it, may I respond to your inquiry regarding the color scheme in my living room and boudoir. The walls are white and the drapes are white. The latter are are Osnaberg - or Duck or whatever that heavy cotton stuff is made of. The sofa on which Celeste figures in the picture is red, a rather orange red, with a sufficient design in the piece of flowered chintz (glazed) as to embrace quite a spectrum of yellow, blue, etc. At the moment I have Indian rugs on the floor, - black and white, or rather black and gray and quite neutral. The portraits on the walls and the west end of the room, save for the fireplace and mirror being solidly in books, their multi-colored bindings I guess are the dominant note. A couple of Mr. Belle's winged chairs, - upholstered in a vague dark plum spotted with gold dots are the only other colors in the room. As I haven't written the owner of the chairs in a couple of years, I have no idea as to when he might be going to want them. I had a note from him a couple of weeks after seeing him in Alexandria for the day, and it was my understanding he was remaining in Paris for some time. He suggested he might be able to use some of his books that were here, for they came with the other things from Puerto Rico along about 1942 or somewhere about the. But at the time I could think of no way of forwarding a packing case of books overseas, and so I let the whole thing slide, and slid it has, ever since. I owe him a letter, and I reckon I shall be writing before long, but at the time the request came for making this comparatively small shipment, there was so much cooking in this neighborhood and the remoteness of New Orleans to effect arrangements for forwarding the things impelled me to delay the whole thing until circumstances were more favorable. I certainly have been leisurely enough in my boudoir the bed tester is trukeky red which has faded to old rose. The draperies at the windows are white, the chairs unvarnished straight back light wood with more or less white cushions. The rugs are the same as the living room. The walls, of course, are white. But, Lord, Yucca isn't half detailed and little Yucca is screaming, and so I shall fold. I'll try to do better next time....

Color scheme Yucca

4010

Thursday, January 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A slight headache on going to bed last night; a slight case of sniffles on awakening this morning. I guess I should have used some of the stuffing on myself that I tucked around the Arenbourg children.

According to my radio, Dallas and Fort Worth were under sheets of ice and Shreveport talked about 20 degree thermometer readings, but Gulf breezes must have staved off the onslaught, for while it has been chill, there has been no ice and about Saturday I shall be undoing the winter garments in the Arenbourg camelia section.

What with a drizzle going all day, I didn't do much flouncing about out of doors, merely enough to get Miss Sally some mandarin branches and some narcissus to decorate her altar for tomorrow's services in her chapel.

And by good luck I was able to round up a heap of stuff from the Christmas batch of mail, and that makes me feel better already. Then, when proper readers came my way, I was able to study the booklet you so thoughtfully forwarded and marked for my attention. It seems to me that the Alexandria Project is just the thing to further and round out much that the undertakings of Mr. Goodrich hasn't touched upon in his pursuits, and I have a feeling he will agree that the thing is worth while. By and large it would seem that his organization has concentrated for the most part on items in museums and galleries. Possibly no means of delving into private collections ever occurred to them, or perhaps it seemed impossible to ever contact the people who might chance to have but a single canvas that would be of interest.

I presume, too, that their slant has been more on the strictly artistic side, since artist and art experts often incline to view art objects but from a single angle, whereas the Alexandria Project will proceed on the theory that many a picture and many a print have historic as well as artistic virtues. I expect to take a number of such prints to Alexandria with me to demonstrate how they reflect a phase of the country's development. For example here at Yucca are a couple of prints of the late 1860's or early 1870's, one entitled: "A Gentleman of Color", the other "Poor White Trash". They are

010P

4011

were brought out at the time the Carpetbaggers were in the ascendancy, and, as the titles suggest, the over-dressed "Gentleman of Color" is on the up and up while "The Poor White Trash" is very obviously on the down grade.

I shall also take a couple of rare prints that I obtained in Mississippi a number of years ago, one "The Battle of Corinth, Miss.", and the other "The Siege of Vicksburg". These were printed in the late 1880's and early 1890's and not only give an interesting geographical concept of the country where the battles were fought, but also reveal such details as Confederate and Union uniforms, flags, etc., and carry a somewhat lengthy caption, giving names of Commanders, names of the companies participating, etc. I have never seen any others in this series, but I assume all the important battles may well have appeared in this series. They were printed in Chicago but I am not certain if they were designed to appeal to one faction only or if they were rather kept pretty much in balance, with a view to selling them to the veterans and families of veterans whose histories in the 1861-1864 scuffle would offer an appeal for preserving the event in this form. At the moment I do not have the name of the Chicago printers, but I shall mention it at another sitting, for it might be possible that we would stumble over others, should the name be familiar. The two we have here, -- about 2 feet by 3 feet, are not framed, and although the edges are frayed, they will be nice when framed, especially with the torn edges showing, I think, as wall decors for Arenbourg eventually, don't you think so.

With all the racket going on about the New Hampshire physican who introduced an air bubble into the blood stream of a dying patient, I ran across a new twist in making things easier for a cow to give birth to a calf. The Rogiers are white trash, -- once removed from the hills to the Cane River country, living up the Bermuda Road just beyond Sammy Balthazar's. Mr. R.'s cow was experiencing difficulties in bringing her offspring into the world and, by way of lending aid, if not comfort, a tractor was pressed into service. The cow was tied securely to a tree, a rope tied about the calf's neck, the other end to the tractor, and the latter started off slowly in low gear. Of course, something had to give, and lo! it was the mother. Don't ask me how it was that the poor calf's head wasn't pulled slap off, for I don't know. But it wasn't and the day following this operation, both mother and child were reported holding their own. In times past I have heard of hill billies doing strange things but this latest twist in animal husbandry beats anything I have stumbled over thus far.

And now for a cup of Tender Leaf and a Kaool with little old Yucca fussing about the tea tray and generally delighting my soul as I further explore the doings of Mr. Donal of China....

810P

4012

Friday, January 6th, 1950.
To be sent to the editor of the New York Times, New York City, New York, U.S.A.

Memorandum: The weather remains damp and chill but no ice has formed and I believe the bitter elements of the Canadian blast have turned definitely in an Eastern direction. I hope it peters out before it reaches Manhattan.

Mrs. Rand telephoned me this morning, saying she would be glad to run up and get me on Sunday afternoon, so that I might spend Sunday night in company with friends who want to give a dinner party, and so forth and so on.

It was certainly kind of her, but naturally I demurred, for I don't want any dinner parties and I prefer to run down that way along about Monday noon, and before I get away again, I shall have seen enough people.

She says Dr. Rand remains flat on his back but there is hope that he may be removed to his home by the latter part of next week. I am so glad for him, for I have a feeling that everyone must be ever so much more comfortable there than any other place, regardless of the excellent arrangements that must obtain for him at the hospital.

I take it there must have been something in the Alexandria paper about Monday's song and dance, for three invitations came by post, -- two dinners, one tea. And tonight at supper, or just after, when we were alone, the merchant planter handed me a note "from that lady" who must have been contacted today. I haven't read the note, but I suppose it envisions some such business at the board. As Saturday's post will not get responses delivered before Monday, my regrets will be a little late in arriving in each case, but since one doesn't decline invitations before receiving them, one will have to accept the refusals whenever they do arrive, even though dinner may be but in the offing. Dining at Clagny, it goes without saying, it but completely out, although there is a chance that I may remain over night with the Rands, returning here on Tuesday, the 10th.

4013

You will not be surprised, therefore, should there be a one day skip in the usual measured tread of communications, but it will, of course, be but for a day

On the home front a little comedy of dogged faithfulness and tears is being played out, the whole business impregnated with a rural touch that could scarcely be found in an urban setting. Mattie, the cook, has a most repulsive colored hog, all spotted in white, red and black so that no one could ever determine its basic color. At pecan time, after hogs had ravaged the Melrose bulb garden, J. H. put out an edict that all hogs found in the gardens would be slaughtered forthwith. And to make the manifesto impressive, several so discovered were shot. In the case of Mattie's hog, its owner finds an unusual problem in that the animal insists on following her where ever she goes, frequently breaking through its pen to catch up with her, whenever she heads across the cotton fields toward the gardens. The hog is about the size of a Police Dog and seems adept in breaking down most barriers, and usually before Mattie makes it to the big house, the hog is slap at her heels.

You can readily imagine how many complications automatically ensue, for Mattie is panic stricken for fear her hog will be shot if discovered inside the garden fence, and since no amount of beating will persuade the animal to go back home, save at Mattie's heels, Mattie inclines to drop whatever she is stirring on the stove and head out across the cotton fields, her hog apparently entranced to be galloping along at her side.

Mattie, being a terrific bag to start with, has easily succeeded in working herself up into a series of spasms over the fate of her hog, and can reel off endless pictures of some horrible disaster awaiting her prize animal. And, of course, the net result is that the hog is having a wonderful time in view of all the attention being bestowed on it; Mattie is having a marvelous time, pleading the cruelties of Fate and the exhausting labors she has to undergo to maintain her animal free from gunshot wounds, while the kitchen and especially the dining room is in a complete shambles, waiting for Mattie to make two or three trips back and forth from her home to the big house, and back home with the pig and so on and so forth but endlessly. It's all so humiliating.....

4014

Sunday, January 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A quiet week end with the weather turning warmer as yours turns colder, and a promise of rain for the morrow, which I really don't need but which would do your local reservoirs so much good.

I did a little gardening Saturday but not too much, what with my sniffles just disappearing and feeling little inclination to get "all steamed up" and thus barge into a bark for the morrow.

I was entranced to get a little reading done, last night, too, and I finished the "Donald of China" volume which certainly gives an interesting picture of the China we have heard about in the first quarter of the present century, and the one we have watched from afar during the second quarter. If Mr. Donald is as remarkable, half as remarkable as the biography indicates, he was really a wonderful man. The latter quarter of the book, dealing much with his association with the "Genissimo" and the latter's remarkable wife, whom Donald called "Missimo" gives a concept of those two personalities who certainly must be more widely known than any other two members of their race. I find myself wondering what has become of them of late, now that the Reds seem to have taken over the country pretty completely. According to Earle Albert Gelle or whatever the author's name is, the interruption and partial estrangement between Donald, as their intimate adviser on the one hand and the "Genissimo" and "Missimo" on the other, was due to some plain talk Donald gave them regarding the extravagant doings of some of the "in-laws", I suppose among the Soongs, - possibly T. V. Soong's wife.

From one paragraph I read some days back, I gathered that in somebody's opinion, perhaps Donald's, was that the chief wrong of the Reds lies in the fact that they are solely interested in the worker from whom they draw their political and financial strength, and not at all concerned with anyone else. Come to think of it, much Red propaganda I have seen during the past 20 years does seem to have concentrated on the virtues of physical effort, and the way the Reds have the thing rigged up makes the ditch-digger the ideal unit in a land that has scant use for a saint or a sage.

Well, so much for all such speculations. I beg your pardon for having rattled along so endlessly on the subject.

4015

For local lore, here is something I bumped into yesterday and liked, as will you.

Last evening Peter passed by, saying his tooth was hurting him and did I have an asperin. I did. In a few minutes he reported the spin gone and that was that. Peter sat by the fire while I was busy at my typewriter. After a little I stopped and turning to him remarked that I thought I smelled smoke. He explained that it was a bit of string he had ignited to inhale the smoke for, as he further explained, "that's sure cure for a headache".

"But I thought you had just taken an asperin, Peter?"

"Yes, sir, I did, but you see I done took that m for my teeth. I'se a-takin' the string smoke for my head."

Don't you love that.

But I must get on for Yucca is making a racket with each tap of these keys. The little old thing reminds me it is tea time, for it is after 10 and I haven't had my supper as yet. I had pilgrims at 4 and Celeste dropped by at 5 to invite me for coffee, and before I left her house a raft of people came whom I didn't know and merely addressed with a "Hail and Farewell".

I telephoned Mrs. Rand at 6. She said the doctor had tried to sit up today but the effort was too much for him. She said he was looking forward to seeing me tomorrow. I have decided I shall return here on Monday night. A couple of more invitations came through Saturday and three different cars came to the front gate today, bearing invitations to dinner during my Alexandria visit. I have too many things I want to do here during the current month, and so I think the best way is to dine with Mrs. Rand at noon, jam in a visit at the hospital, reel off my tirade to the Revolutionary Daughters, swallow a couple of polite sandwiches, some chicken salade and pink tea or whatever accompanies the birth of a National Project, and then withdraw as quickly as possible.

After all, I like sleeping in my own bed and there is nothing for me quite like the Arenbourg dawn, no matter how closely other dawns may resemble it, --don't you think so...

4016

Monday, January 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

If I had good sense, which I need scarcely tell, I have not, I should probably be folding up my beard, but somehow sleep will be so much sweeter, after we have had our nightly little chat.

I think everything went off perfectly, and although I am tired, it is the kind of tiredness one doesn't mind, at the end of a day when labor has been arduous but pleasant and the desired results seem to have been accomplished.

I'll follow it through for you, if you please:

8:30 a.m. Someone knocked on my door. It was Andy to say his mama wasn't doing good and Aurellia had sent him to tell me. I got dressed and went to the big house where I sampled the medical profession by wire. I finally secured a physician.

6:00 a.m. J. H. dropped by. He said he couldn't get away today and that a car and chauffeur would be ready for me whenever I wanted same.

8 a.m. breakfast.

7:30 a.m. Aranbourg.

9 a.m. coffee.

10 a.m. Mr. Brew and I headed for Alexandria.

11 a.m. gave Mrs. Holloman dictation.

12 noon. Dined with Mrs. Rand.

1 p.m. drove to the Baptist Hospital, and spent an hour with Dr. Rand. Found him gay but weak. They say he will be in bed for week, followed by a long recuperation at the Rand Camp on Cane River.

2 p.m. drove to Mrs. Rand's mother, Mrs. White. Chatted with her in her lovely old living room for half an hour.

2:45. Orated to a crowd of the gentry, dishing up the Alexandria Project. I had not noticed the press in an adjoining room where, in the midst of my song and dance,

3104

4017

a billion flashlight bulb started exploding quite unexpectedly.

Somewhere between 3 and 4: - Much business session got under way, immediately following my performance. I was asked to remain present, but I retired to an ante room to adjust my D. A. R. Day tie and consume a Kool.

I was invited to return to the gather where it was announced the meeting had unanimously adopted the Project. That was all I wanted to hear, but it was only then, of course, that conversation got under way. There followed a collation of crab and shrimp salade, a billion kinds of sandwiches, etc., et., etc., and Tender Leaf tea. I thought of my poolr little old Yucca, sitting all alone on my desk at home.

After the biggest piece of food resistance was over, I met and chatted with each member individually. There were a few guests from New Orleans, a couple Regents from Chapters in cities in South Louisiana. They invited me to address their organizations in February. The fashionable young matron, Mrs. Hunter Pierson, rushed up to a group with whom I was chatting, "rs. Rand being among those present. "You all are having cocktails with Irma at 5. We are expecting to come to our house for supper afterward." I could have murdered her, but I smiled knowingly and went along.

5:00. I drove Mrs. Rand home, and while she was preparing a cold drink, I telephoned the Pierson residence and asked the servant to say I would not be able to come to supper.

5:15. Said goodbye to Mrs. Rand, and
6:14 back home and entranced to be here.

I chatted with J. B. a while to cover the Pierson episode and suggesting a "blackout" be inaugurated. He concurred in the matter. Delivered a few messages to Celeste from Alexandria people.

7:30. Got to work on some additional stuff, covering details of the Project for reference by the individual members of the several Chapters represented at the meeting, and knocked off a few bread and butter notes.

And so played out my day. The weather was warm, with intermittent showers that failed to catch me at any time as I moved from place to place. Tonight the sky is ablaze with stars, and, having sketched this little outline for you, I am ready to fold.....

3104

4018

Tuesday, January 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I am sorry to disappoint you but the clipping is merely some drum beating of last week and of no interest. But I send it along, since it may, --or may not, --eventually fit in with the subsequent press notices.

It has drizzled and rained all day, and the only satisfaction come in the weather report which says the percapitation streak runs from Texas through Louisiana, Tennessee, Ohio and New York. I hope your reservoirs got a heap.

My day, in spite of the weather, seems to have been almost as busy as yesterday's line up. Only today's program was catch-as-catch-can, and was concerned primarily with my negro friends, so many of whom seem to act as though I had been away for weeks or months. It's a curious thing but many whom I haven't seen in weeks suddenly, in spite of the rain, converged on Yucca today, having heard that I had been away, friends whom often I don't see for weeks or months on end. It seems to have required a National Project to pry me loose from the plantation. It appears to be a local sensation that I should have indulged in such a new departure.

I had quite a flock of first class mail today but none of it of primary importance, and as I had so many interruptions, I didn't take time out to devote myself much to the services of my secretary. There will be time enough on the morrow when the rain will still be falling and when some of the quiet preceding Monday, will have been restored along the bayous.

Aurelia did come to see me this afternoon. She wanted to confide in me about some of her plans. "As soon as mama gets her check", --and I believe the Old Age Pension checks come in on January 20th or 21st, she plans to move to Natchitoches.

I certainly wish I knew where I left off, but I don't, what with Mr. Brew having tapped on my window quite unexpectedly at a later hour than usual.

The mail turned out to be of scant interest, but I shall send along an enclosure or two regardless.

8104

4019

From the clerk, I learned this morning that a New Orleans car containing several ladies stopped at the store yesterday, asking to see me. He didn't get their names. From quite another source, I learned that they had spoken with one of my colored friends, asking if he thought I would like a statue of the Blessed Martin. I certainly would. I reckon I shall be having a line from one quarter or another before long, and I am all prepared to say Yes. If one should come to hand, I think I shall "rig up" one of the little rooms on the gallery, giving on the white garden, converting the same into a Chapel. It will be a simple affair but adequate to delight my Baptist negro friends and sufficiently impressive to infuriate my mulatto friends who, being Catholic, will resent having to kow-tow to a black saint. I'll probably paint the interior of the room all white, contrive a vague sort of altar, whereon I shall place a couple of iron candleabra do-dads, see if I can't find the old pre-dieu that used to be kincking around the place somewhere and have a couple of little crude benches hewn out of cypress. All in all, it ought to be quite gay, don't you think. Just to give it a touch of authenticity, I shall attempt having the thing consecrated, although that may be something of a stretch, but I shall spring that trap when some of the younger and less hide-bound prelates are about. The Chapel of the Blessed Martin under the Yucca roof which shelters me certainly ought to make the pillars of St. Peter's rock a little but that will do them no harm.

Going back to the interruption, I was perhaps speaking of Aurellia. She told me her mother's check from the State comes on the 20th or 21st, and that she plans to withdraw immediately thereafter and will live in "atchitoches where she expects to have her baby. She hasn't told Celeste that she plans to leave because she feels the racket that always accompanies news of the loss of a servant would be too difficult to bear under present circumstances. It must be admitted that Celeste does go into a tizzy invariably at such times, always blaming the servant for not notifying her in advance of the intention to leave. It never seems to occur to her that if she would carry on less, she might be more likely to receive a notification in advance. But that is the way she is made, I reckon, and the same old surprise parties will forever be bobbing up.

I believe the Dark Duke plans to take over Aurellia's house when she moves and possibly I may be able to assist both the departing tenant and the one just arriving to some mutual advantage, for the one may have items to dispose of to advantage both to herself and the in-coming occupant, and however that may be, I am hoping the changes of residence may be advantageous to both parties. I'm afraid this letter is mighty dull. Perhaps I may hit a better lick on the morrow.....

4020

1504

Wednesday, January 11th, 1950.

Memorandum: I am on the 11th, 1950, and I am on the 11th, 1950.

The enclosure was a surprise, since it had been agreed that all notices on and after the 9th, would appear as straight news and not under the social aegis.

But I think I shall be able to clip this particular item in such a way that the social department will be eliminated, pasting the actual news part on a blank sheet of paper for each of the National moguls who are to receive them. Perhaps the straight news item with a more elaborate account will appear under another headline in Wednesday's paper, - I hope. In the mean time, I send this one along for what it is worth, if anything.

The rains continue and this morning I was soaked twice, once at Arenbourg and once at Yucca, where I had a couple of men digging ditch to drain off water from the foundations of the house where the eaves had been sending a imposing amount of torrents slap under the house. But the temperature continues high and getting soaked with clothes on was but a prelude to getting soaked in my shower, and so I didn't mind at all.

After a prolonged absence of two or three years, I actually got down to call on Miss Sally today, and so I feel inordinately noble for merely having done something which was my duty, too long neglected. Celeste appeared in a shower of rain on my gallery at 3, saying she was running down to "aganolia and would I like to accompany her. I certainly would, for I had about made up my mind to throw care to the winds and accompany Dr. Knipmeyer on the morrow, for a round at dinner, which I was contemplating with infinite bad grace. But this opportunity to slide down today in the rain, and thus be able to stay not more than half an hour or so gave me the loop hole I had been looking for and I made the most of it.

I was a little surprised to learn that she seemed to know more about "onday's doings than I did, but subsequently I learned that both her sisters, - Mme. David and "me. Pierson, had telephoned her immediately after the doings on "onday which accounted for her knowledge of what was cooking.

You will laugh when I tell you that I received a letter from Helen Baldwin today, asking me if I had any idea where she might get in touch with Carolyn. It was a bread and butter note and among other things contained some addresses I had asked for, which I have not as yet been able to transcribe to envelopes. She reported a safe trip home and said it was her understanding that Carolyn had planned to go down to Morganza or where ever her house boat is to see about it and that she was under the impression she might pass

0234

4021

this way, and if so, would I try to find out where she might be reached by mail. Really, Carolyn is what Mrs. Henry might call a sight. Isn't it a pity that Carolyn, having so many excellent qualities, should fall down so flatly in correspondence, but perhaps that is the way God has in keeping things more or less even. Personally I enjoy the contact with Carolyn when she passes this way, and after her departure, I set no expectations afloat as to when, if ever, I shall see her again. Surely I have learned not to look for letters and I don't propose looking for her. She is such a grand person that I am always delighted when she passes this way, but I am never looking for her, so that when she does, which you know is rare, it is alright but nothing which has provided anyone with a keen relish of anticipation.

I reckon this letter must be fairly hodge-podge, for I have been interrupted four times since beginning it, what with a magician performing at the honkey-tonk tonight, and different friends passing this way to inquire into the mysteries of such business, - such as "Do he really eat electric light bulbs", etc., etc.

And one youth who has no sense at all and was a little high, apparently, passed by to show me his new 32. revolver. Somebody is likely to feel the effects of it before the week has play out, but there is always a chance it may be lost in the cotton rows, more like tiny canals.

I read a couple of pages from Will Durant's The Story of Philosophy, a 1933 thing, I believe, which I had never dipped into. I liked the introduction to this new edition. In it I found a phrase which seems to be excellent: - "we learn more and more about less and less and less and less about more and more". He was speaking of the inordinate concentration in fields of scientific research, the scientists who put on blinders to keep themselves from seeing anything but the tiniest segment of some particular limited aspect of one manifestation of life or another, etc., etc. This isn't exactly news but being a facile expression of sensations we have all experienced, it is pleasant to remark upon when encountered in print.

Little old Yucca is starting to eye me with a tell-tale look, but while my impulse is toward the Tender Leaf section, I am bound to knock off some mail before calling it a day. I meant to say the other day that I sometimes hear Capitol Cloakroom, or some such program, Monday nights, I guess, over the Columbia System, and this week I heard the Chairman of the Republican Nation Committee, and I must say if his ideas reflect his party's, that outfit hasn't learned anything in the last 20 years.

But my lack of coherence demonstrates my need to break off anyway, and so I fold herewith. Do hope you are getting some of our rains.....

8304

4022

Thursday, January 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

This inordinate warm weather continues, the ground too damp to do gardening, the air too warm to want to. The forecast for tomorrow is "Cloudy to partly cloudy and warmer". J. H. plans going somewhere at the end of the month and every year when he heads out on such mid seasonal jaunts, everything has a way of freezing up, so I'm looking for a frost on the 29th.

Mrs. Rand telephoned me this morning. She said Dr. Rand is ever so much better and there is hopes of taking him home in a week or two if he continues to improve. She said there is still buzzing about Monday's doings and that she has given my address to a couple of Regents from somewhere or other who have asked for my presence in their February conclave.

I shall be glad to have some of the forms, as mentioned in Mr. Mansford's letter, which I am forwarding, - the letter, under separate cover. I am glad everything there is alright.

My secretary had quite a go at the enclosure from Sister. There seems to be nothing in it of interest, except that it seems to reveal the same disordered mind. I sometimes wonder if to any observer like yourself who has seen her communications over a twelfth month period, --if there appears to be much variation or intensification of the flightiness. Frankly, so far as my contacts with her have evolved, I don't see much difference or change, since she has always manifested such curious ways of doing things and expressing herself. There seemed to be a feeling in Shreveport that her case was growing worse, but so far as I can see, it isn't a bit different than it has always been, and I am persuaded people who haven't known her before don't recognize her rattle brain on early contacts, and so, after a few months have elapsed, conclude that she is changing, whereas she is merely being her usual self.

There was doings next door today in the form of company

SS04

4023

from the Mansura neighborhood, some of that same crowd, -
#The Children Among Strangers" outfit of * last October.
I chanced to be at Celeste's when they blew in at 9 this
morning, but I retreated through an opposite door as they
entered, and never did go back to spoil any of their
card games.

Somebody from the college telephoned today while the
knipmeyer were here and so I did not take the call. It
had something to do about all the new Professors and their
wives hoping for an invitation to come down on Saturday.
I shall telephone them a cheery No on the morrow, I guess.
I don't chance to have anything on the docket for Saturday,
but if the weather lets up a little, I should like to
do a bit of gardening and nothing is quite so devastating
for gardening as pilgrims, unless it be bees.

A half dozen more letters or so, and I shall be nearly
caught up with pre Christmas mail. I am ashamed to confess
that there are still several non-descript gifts which haven't
been acknowledged as yet, but I am determined to get to them
before the week is done. There seems to be a growing tendency
on the part of some people to have stores mail fruit cakes and
the like, with a card inserted from the donor (or is it one "n").
Be that as it may, I have two fruit cakes, two little boxes
of candy and some kind of a smoking gadget which have come
through such channels, and from people in large cities, -
San Antonio, New Orleans, Chicago, etc., to whom I never
write, and whose addresses I have forgotten. In each
instance, I carefully preserved the wrappers in which the
things came, with a view to acknowledging them promptly, only
to discover no address at all, save that of the store.
I suppose I carry a few hundred addresses and telephone numbers in
my memory, but I seem to be mighty poor at holding in mind
the more complicated numbers which I use but once a year.

The current warm spell seems to make me so sleepy
that I don't get far with my reading. To hand has come
a thing which I believe is entitled "Jefferson, the Virginian"
possibly by Malone, or some such. I shall let it sit for
a while on my front gallery until I am done with the Durant
Philosophers. If alone be the correct name of the author,
I must say I don't remember hearing of any such, but I shall
give you a report later. Almost anything on Mr. J., however,
ought to be to my liking.

Little Grandpa, the gray cat, is fixing to have kittens
again. I suppose she knows what she is doing but she always
puzzles me by finding the highest, most difficult place to
climb during her pregnancy. Nightly and half a dozen times
a day she scales one of the pillars of Yucca and apparently
plans to receive old Mr. Stork somewhere in the attic. She is
what might be styled a sight.....

SS04

4024

Friday, January 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:
I heard a remark at the store this morning that delighted
me:

"Today is Friday the 13th and there ain't but one
other all this year. It comes sometime in October."

I certainly hope it comes around the middle of the month.

It has rained off and on all day, which would have enabled
me to get much done inside if there had not been too many
pilgrims. And between pilgrims, there were callers such
as Celestine whom I hadn't seen since Carolyn and Helen were
here. She passed this way to say she had completed a picture
as ordered by one of the girls and wondered if I could mail
it for her. I could.

Except for the month, the weather wasn't so good for those
who were moving today, and lots of scuffling back and forth
seemed to be the order of the day. Elmer, the one time cook
who baked the truck intact, was one of those leaving. During
the past year she has occupied a house across the river from
Melrose. She now goes on one of J. H.'s plantations 6 or 8
miles up Little River. In the past ten years, Elmer has occupied
10 different situations, being an extreme example of that
type of person who seems unhappy if forced to occupy one dwelling
more than a twelfth month. Locally, among planters, this
tendency seems to be considered a negro characteristic, but well
do I recall many a family in Manhattan who felt bound to
spend 11 months of the year in search of an apartment a little
different from the one into which they had just moved.

I suppose all people are more or less nomadic although it
always comes as something of a surprise to me when in studies
about Americans I run across the statement that they are
among the more nomadic of all civilized people. It is good for
me to have this brought up on occasion for I must say that
most of the people I know usually tend to stay put, and as

4025

you know, I tend to tolerate almost anything to avoid even the thought of changing residences.

The current heat wave has set the Chinese magnolias to blooming and on Monday, while passing through a wooded section 30 miles below here, I noticed two wild azelias in full flower. Surely we can't expect to get through the balance of the so-called winter without a freeze, and a heap of these more daring arborial numbers are going to get pinched.

I felt sorry for "Adam Regard today. She sent a letter to the Post Office, addressing the envelope with the name of the person for whom it was intended, the street and the state, but omitted the name of the town. The omission was called to her attention but she failed to grasp the necessity of putting down the name of the town. She is so wonderfully kind and active for her 80 years, it is pitiful to notice this little tell-tale indication of a mind that is beginning ever so slightly to slip.

I hadn't seen Taffy in ever so long until tonight at first dark when I returned from supper. There on my doorstep sat Taffy, just as big as life and twice as natural. About 9 o'clock, I stepped out on the gallery in response to a bang on the screen door by old Grandpa, only to discover that Taffy had learned the same trick of catching a claw in the screen and pulling the door so it would bang when released.

The sectional circles which I laid out around the sun dial, giant's beard edged with narcissus bulbs is now ever so pretty, all the bulbs having come into flower, making little broken circles of white against the accompanying ones of green, and the whole seeming to be a horticultural appendage of the wite column and the metal dial.

And now I must get some stuff done by way of a form letter to which the clippings from the Town Talk will be joined, and thus, --I hope, --set the D. A. R. girls to work, further afield.

And so little old Yucca will have to wait, although if one he is really reflecting his master's impulse, he must be kicking up his feathers in protest at the delay of the Tender Leaf tea hour.....

4026

Sunday, January 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your elegant letter of Tuesday in Saturday's post.

And thanks much-much for sharing the enclosure with me, and for being so thoughtful as to send along the clipping of the new World Telegram Sun. I had not heard of the merger and of course was ever so interested, for I used to read the Sun religiously. Somehow I always used to like the Saturday edition particularly, it seemed so complete that it suggested the Sunday Times. And thanks for telling me that Ward Morehouse and H. I. Phillips are being carried over to the new set up. Somehow it seems especially wonderful to me that H. I. Phillips is still active for it seems to me he must have been on the Sun for at least a million years.

When one paper absorbs another, one or the other dies, of course, and it seems too bad that the good old Sun, so long such a distinguished journal, should have to fold up. It will forever be remembered, I suppose, as one of the great papers in the history of New York journalism.

I can't remember anything much about its editorial policy, but I assume it was pretty much on the rugged individualist side if not ultra conservative. Apparently I didn't read its editorials much more than I did the Times, but the paper had so many good features and such extensive news reports that it always stood high in my estimation. I don't remember if Herr Voltz read it or not but it seems to me he would have relished its completeness.

I am floored that you should have had another round of South American visitors. I never knew there were so many people in South America and that so few of them ever "staid put". One great advantage in living in New York is the number of people you see passing through, and, you most certainly agree, it is its big disadvantage, too.

Proportionately the same may be said of Melrose, I reckon, but numerically we have the advantage on Cane River as opposed to you on the Hudson.

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4027

And while I think of it, let me refer to the Pilgrimage article. I have never sent it because Ora has never brought it back to me. I have spoken to her about it a couple of times, and shall mention it again. Perhaps she has mislaid it. I shall try doing it again if it doesn't come to hand shortly. There was a matter involving the big sum of one dollar, - actually just that, which involved round after round of legal scuffling, and because of my desire to never involve such matters in local scrutiny, I leaned pretty heavily on Ora and her husband and they were ever so kind and accommodating about the whole business that required quite a bit of their time and all their confidence. In view of these circumstances that transpired just at the time Ora had undertaken pasting the Pilgrim thing together, I have naturally not felt impelled to make too much racket about the manuscript. I shall, however, ask about it again this week, but I mention the other matter in order that you may the better appreciate my inclination not to stir the Pilgrim too persistently.

Last night at supper, J. H. remarked that some colored man had just dropped by the store, remarking he had seen Dr. Wenk with the boys, in Cloutierville. This afternoon about 3, Dr. Wenk appeared on my gallery with the two children. They were all in hunting costume. We sat of the gallery for a few moments chatting when some pilgrims came. I asked nothing about when he had arrived, and I suppose he assumed I believed he had merely spent the day in the hills with his blunderbuss. He asked if J. H. was in town. I told him I supposed so. He said he thought he would be. Celeste's car was at her front door but he asked nothing about her and did not stop to see her. Where he spent the night, I wouldn't know and wouldn't care. Last year he parked here. It is nice to know he found another habitation. He was very friendly, as he invariably is with me. I suppose he didn't dare, had he wanted to, pass by Celeste's, following the big racket on Christmas night, for what with news ever reaching his wife that he had called next door, there would have been a guarantee of a panic, I suppose.

It was good to have an account of your New Year's doings. It all sounded a little hectic and I am so glad you remained over night on Long Island. Isn't it good that you had a measure of quiet before the work week began again. I certainly have been lucky these recent years to be able to wind up the old and begin the new year in the quiet of Yucca. I must confess I do seem a little unsocial when I turn my telescope on myself when considering such matters, but for those who must have a heap of excitement on that date, my presence would scarce be noted or my absence remarked, and so I save my conscious, and confidentially I find myself as happy as a clam enjoying the quiet of my own society, little old Yucca, my reading machine and thoughts of others, with one of whom I somehow invariably feel such thoughts, regardless of space, are being shared.....

4028

4028

January 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

More rain and a little cooler, but mighty little work outside.

But I had a fairly busy day regardless, what with pilgrims this morning and a telephone from Mrs. Holloman, saying she would like to pass this way this afternoon. She came and we did quite a bit of work, although her sister from Tennessee or some strange place came with her, and three isn't so helpful in dictation.

She did bring a couple of items with her of interest, including a note from the State Library quoting some authority on musical American, stating that in 1854 the Black Swan appeared in England where she gave a special performance for Queen Victoria.

She is referred to as The Black Swan, born in 1809 and was buried in 1876 under the name of Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield. Good old Postell had mentioned a pamphlet which he found mentioned as comprising some 18 or 20 pages, and I believe it is entitled Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, the Black Swan. Howard Tilden Tulane library does not possess a copy and so we are casting about in Philadelphia, the University and the Historical Society, for a copy.

I shall be interested to learn how the Taylor gets into the picture, since the Black Swan took the name of her former mistress, Greenfield, and up to the present, I never heard her mentioned as Elizabeth but rather as Eliza. As slaves had no last names, it will be interesting to discover how that turned up. I take it that she must have begotten a family, since Mrs. Andrews of California must be her granddaughter. Perhaps Taylor was the husband's name but she retained the Greenfield as a last name because of her fame as a singer.

Be that as it may, it is fun continuing the search for particulars which do somehow seem to grow slowly but definitely. It is remarkable how close this lady nearly escaped contemporary recognition, for I reckon no one would likely have given her much thought, had the letter Mrs. Moore tossed into the trash basket at Connelly's Tavern been permitted to remain there. Surely she - Miss Greenfield, not Mrs. Moore, ought to get another grip on fame if, as I hope, the Picayune does give her a fair amount of space when the current article is ready for print.

8304

4029

I take it the Alexandria Town Talk must circulate a little up this way, in view of the telephone Celest had today from a niece or great niece, of Lestan Prudhomme, our favorite local diarist. I have forgotten what this woman's name is, possibly Debillieux, or some such, but I do recall her first name is Julie, named after Lestan's sister. She asked Celeste if she thought I could ever been persuaded to come to Natchitoches. It seems Miss Julie has some old portraits, she wants me to see, and as she lived in the old house, - a charming one, built by Lestan's papa in the 1850's, I shall welcome the opportunity to explore both portraits and home. It was so warm last night, I didn't feel so very sleepy and so got around to read a couple of chapters from the Irwin or rather the Durant volume on Philosophy. I like the study of Epinoza whose name somehow finally got changed to Spinoza. Mention was made about his visit, at the Commander's invitation, to visit the camp of the Prince of Conde in Holland, at some time or other when the French and Dutch armies were in one of their endless scuffles. Nothing was said about his correspondence with the Princesse Palatine, Louis XIV's sister-in-law, which used to be rather brisk, if I recall, but mention was made of Louis XIV's offer of a house in Paris for the noble philosopher.

A little further along something like this struck me as smaller nothing, - Italy got the Renaissance, Germany the Reformation and France Voltaire.

And did I mention the reference to Francis Bacon and his death in the early 1620's, as a result of over exposure when he experimented with stuffing chickens with snow on the assumption that thus frozen, inside and out, they might keep for an indefinite period. It seems to be Standard Brands ought to like something like that, especially as it transpired along about the time the Pilgrims were tripping over Plymouth Rock.

Well, so much for a literary evening, which won't be persued much farther in the reading department tonight, for my sniffles have come back and my head feels owl-ish, and I think I shall fold up rather early.

As for the enclosure, it speaks for itself. There is something rather odd about it in that reference is made to a "Mrs" somebody or other, and that letter is from a descendant of Grandpere, who, in turn, as you will note, they refer to as a negro. Now the Picayune never in its life ever referred to any colored woman as "Mrs.", and yet here that title is accorded her. I suppose this notice is put in to discourage other Metoyer descendants from taking pen in hand, but would you think such a casual article would have impelled so much doings on any score...

1304

enclosure re Audubon
originals
(separate notes)

4030

Tuesday, January 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

In accordance with your suggestion, I pass along the particulars regarding the Civil War illustrations. A great deal of fine script appears under each print, but it has to do with details regarding the battles and so I have not included it.

The other letter from Alice's sister, Mary Whitaker, may or may not have passing interest. In the quotation she gives from the illustration of the Doe's head, you will notice the name Harris appears, - and possibly the other man who was closely associated with Audubon during the summer of the year noted in the quotation. The men were in the Mississippi Valley during that summer, but in view of the mention of Mount Vernon, I am a little at a loss to know just where that might have been. I doubt if it was the George Washington plantation in Virginia, and so far as I know Audubon was not in Natchez that summer, where there chances to be a Mount Vernon plantation in the Kingston neighborhood, not far from Mantua. But this point is of scant importance, although I may eventually trace it down.

The weather remains much too warm, and it tempted me to garden today, but my sniffles are still with me, and I thought it wise not to get up to my hips in such business until I am rid of my cold.

Accordingly I remained rather close to Yucca, and was glad I did so, for Mrs. Holloman passed this way, and I am glad I didn't miss her, for she had some data that was of considerable interest regarding the Metoyer genealogy.

The article in the Picayune, which I forwarded in my last Memo, set her to work trying to establish the actual birthplace of Augustin Metoyer, in order that she might pass along particulars to the Picayune. I think she is "singing songs to a dead mule", so far as the Picayune goes, for I doubt if its editors care a hoot about the matter. But I am glad she felt moved to do so, since she was able to get some Church records that seem to clarify one or two points that have long puzzled me.

4031

You will recall that in his Will, Grandpere didn't mention his son, Louis. If today's Church records she photo-stated are correct, Grandpere never had a son by the name of Louis.

According to her record, - from the St. Augustin Church, Thomas Metoyer (white) had a number of children, the first born being twins, Augustin (Grandpere) and Suzanne, and then came several others, including Louis. In the enumeration of Augustin's children no mention is made of any Louis, and so I assume that the young Louis who built the big house at Melrose in 1833, must have been the son of old Louis, brother of Augustin, and as old Louis died in 1832, I take it old Louis lived at Yucca which must have been abandoned by young Louis for the big house (Melrose) when the old man died.

Mrs. Holloman is giving me copies of the photo-stated material and we shall eventually incorporate them with our data. The Suzanne mentioned by Dr. Overdyke in his letter to me some months ago, must have been not Augustin's twin sister, but perhaps a daughter of Grandpere, - the Suzanne who was the largest slave holding planter of the female persuasion in Louisiana.

I apologize for burdening you with all these details, but since I have dwelt on related matters so extensively in the past, I send these new factors along for what they are worth, and if you wish, shall be glad to send along the photographic copies of the records when they come to hand. One disturbing thing about the records is that they are records contrived in the 1880's, more than a hundred years after Grandpere's birth. I can't imagine why these records covering births, marriages and deaths a century earlier, should have been set down, and are considered authentic by the Church, unless, perhaps, the earlier records had become so frayed that a transcript had to be made, and was so made, with the result that some clerical numb-skull at some later date, "cleaned up" the place, and destroyed the books which had been compiled at the beginning of the advent of civilization in this area.

I do know that one Father Regis in the early 1900's burned a great many of the local records, but I had always supposed they were contemporary ones when he, himself, was begetting mulatto children by his parishoners, and therefore had an excellent motive for suppressing details regarding such doings.

I thought of your and your kindness in sending me the newspaper clipping of the de Migne betrothal some weeks ago when tonight Lowell Thomas really went to town reporting the wedding at Beloeil, although he didn't attempt the name. Zia, all in black, with a black tiara, and that I should have liked to see.....

Lestan's
home
4032

Wednesday, January 18th, 1950.

Memorandum:

My meandering secretariat hasn't appeared, and so I have a bit of mail tucked in my armoire to be absorbed either later tonight or on the morrow.

I went to town this morning on the invitation of Miss Julie Prudhomme. You would have loved the visit, for she lives in the sedate brick house on Front Street, two or three doors below the lady doctor, in the home Lestan, father of the diarist, built in the 1850's. The present Miss Julie, perhaps in her 60's, is the daughter of Sado, brother, --the younger brother, of Lestan, the diarist. The house was built for comfort and for individual privacy. The central hall, for example, has its doors on each side so placed that no one in a drawing room on one side of the hall can be seen by anyone in a drawing room on the opposite side of the hall. Both sides of the house have doors giving into rooms so that one may enter or leave without having to go through the central hall. Lestan, the diarist, had his apartment on the second floor. The dining room, in an elongated oblong, runs three quarters of the way across the back of the house. At one end of this room is a fire place, while at the opposite end is a little enclosed staircase, at the foot of which is the side door which Lestan used to enter or leave the house, and while the door actually gives into the dining room, the little staircase cuts off a section of the room, and one may still see the rods where the curtain blocked off the tiny vestibule from the dining room, so that Lestan, the diarist, might come in or go out without getting tangled up with any dinner parties that might chance to be in progress.

At the back of the house is a two soty "L", - the pantry, kitchen, cook's quarters, etc., and there is much brick pavement remaining of what was originally an entire garden paved with brick, save for the sections in which shrubs and plants flourished.

Miss Julie has many souvenirs of "little" Lestan, letters, books, etc. Celeste and Madam Regard were present and Miss Julie's sister, Clothilde, (Mrs. Lester Hughes), and so talk was brisk and of necessity light. I shall go back again to chat with Miss Julie alone.

I heard one thing of a contemporary panic which I want to pass along. What the New York press could do with this, if it should fall into the proper hands. It was recited by Miss Clothilde, whose husband is theatchitoches District Attorney.

Each season a variety of entertainments, lectures, etc., invariably are presented at the college, - Cornelia Otis Skinner, Martha Graham, symphonies, etc., and among the other items scheduled for this season

4033

SC04

is a group of actors who are scheduled to present Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew. I believe they are expected to arrive this week, and in advance of their arrival, as is the custom, a list of the number of people in the cast was forwarded and reservations made by the college committee. Among those so many in the present list, are two negroes, whom the committee assumed were probably chauffeurs or so such, and reservations were accordingly made with Dr. Johnson, the Natchitoches negro physician, who usually attended to the housing of people of color in such cases.

But picture the consternation of the oldsters on the committee, when, as of yesterday, I believe, it was discovered that there are two characters in the Shakespearean piece who are colored, and the two negroes for whom reservations were made were not chauffeurs or servants but actually members of the cast.

Some of the old die-hards are frantic, for, as they see and fear, if negro actors were ever permitted to perform at the college, all the negroes in the world would next be trying to matriculate for courses, and that, of course, would simply kill the stiff-necked. At first the idea occurred to them that the performance should be cancelled, but as the contract would then oblige the committee to pay for the performance regardless, and subscribers would thus be cheated out of their tickets, that presented a problem. Then there was hopes that some white people, blacked up, might be substituted, but some twist or other makes that impossible. At the moment, everyone is going around in circles and no solution has been discovered.

interruption.....

I have read your elegant letter, one of the grandest ever coming to hand. How sweet of you to say so many lovely things. It was nice you saved the account of the D. A. R. doings until an hour of guaranteed quiet, even though the report on that particular day must have been pretty dull reading, set forth in Time Table style, if I remember correctly. But in spite of its humdrum recital, it apparently conveyed a couple of thoughts intended expressly for you and, I, in turn, are as happy now as you were on that occasion, what with your letter to make life worth while.

And thanks for telling me about new aspects of Manhattan, the situation of the new United Nations headquarters, which sounds fabulous, and all. And the clipping is timely, too, about the Princeton publication of volume 1 of the Jefferson papers. The book on Jefferson I am reading is by Dumas Malone, and is being effected, - there are to be several volumes, from funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation, - the Laura Spellman, branch, I suppose. It is dull enough, in a way, and yet dull only as concentrated food is dull, so that hard tack for the casual person becomes excellent fare for the enthusiastic soldier in such fields of endeavor.

And down I fold, but little Yucca is so beautiful in the tender leaf section, I shall not have him jumping Coca-Cola bottles for a while.....

3804

4034

Thursday, January 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It's Arenbourg's birthday, in spite of, and in part because of the sudden drop in the temperature to around 40. The dampness continues.

Early this morning I found an excellent opportunity to obtain some gardenias, and what with the promise of widely scattered showers, the moment seemed perfect for making the most of the unexpected availability of some exceptionally nice plants, perhaps a couple of feet high, and withal ever so bushy. And so I laid hold on them and my dint of much marching up and down the road, succeeded in getting them planted before the thermometer began dropping around noon. I placed them in Unit No. 3, in an uneven line among the magnolias and lilies hard by the dividing line between Arenbourg and Uncle d'Or's. I think they should form a nice back-drop in such a situation, as view from almost any place along the terrace. The ground is terribly rich, having once been the site of an ante bellum barn. A couple of years ago I set out a flock of them in the same situation but the prolonged drought "cooked" everyone of them before they had a chance to demonstrate what they could do on such rich fare. Perhaps this year's amounts of rain and sun will be in better balance and some of these will take hold. At least they are starting out under favorable circumstances, and so their chance of survival is at least a little over 50 per cent.

I have read a little more from the Dumas Malone Jefferson, and I find it the most complete thing I have run into, including the Bower's biography. I believe this long work ends with Mr. Jefferson's departure for Europe. I certainly hope the author succeeds in completing that succeeding volume soon, for that ought to make excellent reading, if carried out with the same regard for detail as the present first volume exhibits.

I am glad you heard a portion of "Missimo's" speech, just prior for her departure for Formosa. I missed it. The racket that exploded over the radio last night when there was much to do about releasing some version of the Wallace report of 1944 or whenever, regarding Washington's attitude toward the "Genissimo" recalled to mind how Donald of China had had hard going, so far as Mr. Big of China was concerned. I find myself in a quandary as to where I stand in regard to all this business. I hear so much talk about "political parties" in China, and yet I

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cannot imagine such a thing. Democracy applied to hundreds of millions of starving, uneducated people is perfectly ridiculous, of course. Obviously there must be some kind of a Mogul to direct such a mass, and I incline to think China was lucky during the years she had the "Missimo" to temper the political hurricanes.

Except for a very few characters in the political merry-go-round as were rattled off by the reader of the Donald book, I kept in mind but a few with any distinction as to which might be which. Apparently Donald, --and the author of the book, -- had considerable admiration for some young Marshall from the Northern provinces, but at the present moment I have no idea if this may be the man currently in power in Red China. The youth to which considerable space was given had originally dominated Manchuria but later, on Donald's recommendation, merged his forces with the "Genissimo's". Donald made a tour of Europe with the young Marshall in the 1930's, when everyone was on friendly terms, -- the four I mean. It was the same Marshal who later had something to do with the kidnapping and then the releasing of the "Genissimo". Donald wrote several people the man was unquestionably a potential power in the future of China. I wonder if he could be the same one that is temporarily on top in this new Red set up.

The local tendency for flying up and down the road seems to be going full tilt again. Yesterday J. A. spent the day in Baton Rouge, returning after midnight. And before noon today, he was off again for New Orleans. I wouldn't know why he didn't spend the night in Baton Rouge and proceed from there, instead of coming all the way back here, just to start back over the same road again this morning. Celeste takes Adam Regard to Mansura tomorrow, and will leave her there when she returns here Saturday, to start out with J. A. for Memphis on Sunday, to be gone for two or three days. It makes me tired, just to think about it. But they all seem to relish it, and so long as I don't have to follow suit, I am enchanted.

A very timely present came to hand this morning just before Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer arrived. I had run out of Sherry of which Dr. K. is very fond. He likes port alright but prefers the other. And about two minutes before they got here a package came from Dr. and Mrs. Yaeger. It was a bottle of some kind of wine, the like of which had never passed my lips before. It isn't Sherry, they tell me, but has a Cherry base. Be that as it may, it was timely and good stuff, too. I have the bottle soaking at the moment, and if the labels come off, I shall send them along with this Memor. I take it the beverage is imported, but it is possible there may be an American equivalent. I remember once how entranced I was to discover that Macy's Creme de Cacao is the same as the same beverage imported from France in individual bottles, whereas Macy has its supply brought in in bulk, I believe. I thought you might like to inquire if there be an American duplicate of the present stuff. If so, it ought to be grand.....

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Friday, January 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It's Arenbourg's birthday again, may I tell you.....

I had in mind to set out some Pink Perfection camellias this season, and I may be able to find some later, but they are rather scarce and incline toward being expensive. I did find some Opalousas Pinks, however, and as they are quite lovely, too, I invested in them at this go-round.

It remains cloudy and damp but it is warmer and thus is advantageous for planting, and for the next year, we ought to keep our fingers crossed, so far as these items go, and I hope they will go on for a couple of hundred years at least.

I talked with Alexandria this morning and was perfectly delighted when told I could chat with Dr. Rand who is home from the hospital. He told me he was able to sit up for an hour yesterday and is already making plans to pass some time at his camp. I reckon that may be a few months yet, but it is good to know he is looking forward with eagerness to such an outing. He had many things to tell me about his reading, and I recommend the Dumas Malone book to him which I think he will relish especially the sections touching on gardening at Monticello, etc.

And as I disconnect the Alexandria hook up a call came through from Natchez. It was none other than Mrs. Feriday Byrnes. The connection was fair and I made the most of the opportunity to make inquiry regarding half a dozen points, since my grapevine in Adams County seems to be an intermittent sort of instrument. Roane called to ask if she might make plans to drop over this way with Alice before long. It seems Alice plans to visit Natchez before long, -- "before long" being Alice's phrase, and one which only she would know the meaning of. Roane says Alice's book seems to be going along alright and everybody in Natchez, of course, is picturing himself or herself in one character's role or another. Roane says she has selected the heroine's role for herself.

I asked her about Mrs. Brandon. She said she hadn't seen her lately but understood she had come through the operation alright. She said she understood further, --and this was good news in a way, --that Miss Nellie was taking an apartment in

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Mrs. Moore's house, somewhere in the neighborhood of Arlington. As those two ladies have been good friends for so many years and have many mutual enthusiasms, they ought to find common satisfaction in dwelling under the same roof, I imagine. I imagine I am definitely not in Mrs. Moore's good graces, but perhaps this new association may repair destroyed fences, - or tear down more. The important thing is that Mrs. Brandon is apparently alright, and is going to remain in Wachez, which, for her sake, I am ever so glad, for I doubt if the Atlanta sejours were ever very restful or satisfactory to her, except for her association with her sister.

I asked Roane about oil. She said she had to admit that a well had been brought in on her Beverly Plantation, slap across the road from la Maisonette which she rigged up for Dr. Miller years ago. I assume Roane has always had wealthy, and now, of course, this oozing of black gold will pile up additional reserves. Just another illustration in the opulent Wachez country of the old saw: "Him what's got, gits."

Sometime I would ask you, or rather, I ask you if sometime, - and there is no rush about it, - you would kindly look in the Manhattan telephone book, for a thing which may be listed as "Society of the Blessed Martin". Eventually I should like to write to that organization which, if memory serves, used to be situated in or near East 51st Street. I don't know how such Societies, - if they be, - are listed in the Classified Book, but possibly a telephone to somebody like your friend, Francis, Cardinal Spellman, may produce the address. I pray you, however, not to go to any trouble about this business, for if it doesn't turn up, - the listing, - at first glance in the telephone book, just let me know and I can telephone Bishop Greco of Alexandria, and I presume he will be able to supply the address. At the moment I can't think why I want to write that Society, except that, if and when Yucca gets jacked up again, I propose to go ahead with the Chapel, and it is possible that the Society may be interested in the business, should they be advised of the plans.

I may have mentioned in an earlier letter that Miss Sally nearly when wild with joy when she heard I was contemplating such a business and offered to assist me in every way. Off hand I can't think how she could do a single solitary thing to help, except to brow-beat the local priests to consecrate the thing, but I think I can do that under my own steam. I can't imagine a Catholic Priest lending himself to blessing a Chapel contrived under the roof of a non-Catholic, but if the local one should balk, I think I could push the Alexandria Bishop into making a trip up here to do the business, and that would really occasion a flurry in local Catholic dove cots. Well, Lord so things turn, and don't you think a bowl of Opolousas Pinks at the feet of black old Martin ought to be nice.

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has some of the most beautiful to be seen in the whole of the South. The weather is just what I need, and the people are just what I need. Sunday, January 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum: I am writing to you to tell you that I am a human being being what they are, you will take it as a matter of course that I am complaining that it is too humid outside and too lacking of humid qualities inside.

In short, somewhere or other a water pipe has broken and the result is that all faucets are dry. And I want to plunge about in my tub, - but not in a dry one.

But tomorrow is another day and Puny will be here before dawn if he doesn't encounter too many beer bottles tonight, and thus I shall be able to work on my long beard by sun up, - or failing that, I can at least take a short swim in Cane River, what with the thermometer in the upper 70's.

It seems to have been a fairly busy week end, but I don't seem to recall why Saturday was especially so. Today, however, there were lots of pilgrims, and that somehow always eats up time alarmingly fast. But I was glad to see Ed and Horace Rand this morning. They came by on a dual errand, to tell me of their father's progress, which seems to be satisfactory, and Ed wanted to take up the matter of a letter I wrote him, recommending that Hot Wells have its name changed to Alexandria Spa. He said he had shown it to several member of the Chamber of Commerce and they want to know if they may publish it in some paper or magazine or some such and if they may use it on the air. I told them to go ahead, although frankly I don't remember now much about it, since I merely tossed the thing off in a gay mood, and since the thing was intended solely for Ed. I certainly made no effort to keep the thing within such bounds as public gaze might recommend. But it seems that the Chamber likes the idea and wants to do something about it, and they certainly have my benediction, if anything I had to say will be of service.

And this morning, too, I was delighted to have a flock of Viennese youths and maidens who were charming. They seem to be a group here from Austria, on some kind of a Choral or group singing tour, and were scheduled to perform at the college this afternoon. I promised to tune in, but too many other people got between me and my radio. The youths retained the military correctness approaching the mechanical in their bowing and handshaking, and the little gestures

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brought back a whole flock of memories of different climes and different civilizations, and their shadows striking against the backdrop of Chinese magnolias and bamboo were somehow more than shadows, and I found myself hoping a few petals would get tangled in their curls and thus take back a fragrance of lazier days and ways when Cane River has disappeared and the blue Danube has come back into focus.

I can't say the magnolias are at their best, but probably are seen to best advantage this week end, since it seems improbable another week of high temperatures can possibly ensue, and of course one good frost, and this year's flowering will be finished. But I am glad they could see this manifestation of a "flowering Congo" in an American setting, for it may provide a pleasant memory when they glance backward in days and years to come.

A stilted dinner with Dan, after which he returned to town, and the rest of the day I was quite alone on the plantation, except for a few negroes who were all showing signs of too much merriment on Saturday night.

I was glad to see Dr. and Mrs. Coombs with some guests of theirs. I volunteered a tour for their guests, more on the horticultural side than the historic, and that was pleasant. I did not ask them to sit down, however, and it was as well they didn't linger too long, for there were other people, mostly on the dull side. I did read quite a bit last night before folding up my beard, and am convinced the Dumas Malone Jefferson is about the completest picture of his colonial life that one is ever likely to run across. He could have dwelt longer on doings at Monticello when the Hessians were quartered in the neighborhood, but that is because I could stand a whole book on that section instead of a few pages. He himself says that many will find the space allotted to Jefferson as Governor too wearisome, and it does cover a period in which nobody shines to advantage, due in part, thinks Mr. Malone, to the fact that the Constitutional amendments or rather Constitutional limitations imposed on the Governor made it difficult for him to do much anyway, and apparently in those years, at least, Mr. Jefferson's medium wasn't so much executive as legislative. Unthinkable in the role of dictator, admirable as a philosopher and an initiator of legislation.

Well, so much for the book review business, and I shall be depressed when I am done with the book, for like wading through some of Saint Simon, some of it may seem a little too detailed while being perused, but one suddenly recognizes with regret that with the closing of the book, a doorway has been closed on a whole era, a phase of life at once fascinating and fabulous.

It is almost 9, and I have a few things to attend to, including a trip to the cistern for even though little old Yucca may not go swimming in the tub, at least a couple of turns in the Tender Leaf Department are quite within the realm of reality forthwith.....

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Monday, January 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum, to be read to the residents of the plantation. How nice to have your elegant letter of Tuesday, the 17th. I haven't quite finished it as yet, as one of my little helpers was called away and the other hasn't appeared as yet. If he does come, fine, and if he doesn't, they the armoir will hold more happiness for me on the morrow.

And how thoughtful of you to send me page 2 of the Picayune. "A fair exchange is no robbery" according to the old adage, and what with my copy having gone forward to you, we are now both possessed of the same item. I have a letter to send, which I dictated to Mrs. Holloman for her to send to the Picayune in pursuance of the article in question. It is with a batch of stuff that I want to run through, for I haven't had it read back as yet, and so I shall send it along shortly, and perhaps you may want to attach it in the neighborhood of the clipping itself, as it is in pursuance of that one.

And thanks for telling me of the curiously little issuing and withdrawing of the invitation to the resident's daughter. I hadn't heard anything about it and was ever so eager, of course, to have the details. In line with such business, that section of Helen's letter which went forward to you yesterday will be to the point, her reference to the doings of the League of Women Voters.

The warm weather continues to obtain, and what with J. H. being away, I made the most of the opportunity to get a big sweep done at "elrose", with six men cutting bamboo all day, and with the prospect of twice as many on the morrow. Last year there was scant opportunity for such business, and this onslaught not only makes up for two years but also affords a heap of less virile stuff to make a go of it, since nothing in the plant world I ever head of has a chance to grow in opposition to bamboo which literally "takes the place" if not slashed down once in a while. It seems so odd that Mr. Bachelier and several people in town never had any luck making the stuff grow. I never have much luck making it stop. Mr. Bachelier was forever after me to try planting some at Arenbroug but I never wood. I can have enough fun keeping up with the weeds without taking on a bamboo Forrest.

4041

As anticipated, Puny was here at dawning, and it was good to have oceans of water swirling about in the dried up bath of Sunday night.

But each day brings its measure of mystery, and today's is of quite a different order. A few little mice got passed Grandpa, and somehow entered Yucca which is more or less tight, and seemingly impregnable. I reckon they may have dashed in an open door at sometime when pilgrims were scuffling about. I have been setting a trap for them nightly and catching one for Grandpa's breakfast each morning. The trap is one of those flat pieces of wood with a heavy wire that slaps over when sprung, and usually knocks the unfortunate mouse into the next world in a twinkling. This morning about 4 o'clock I heard the thing bang in its usual manner, but it was a disappointed Grandpa who greeted me at the door a first day, for I could find neither the mouse nor the trap. The Dark Duke passed this way this noon, and I set him to work finding the one or the other which I suppose must be somewhere here in my boudoir, but he had no better luck than I. He finally came to the conclusion that the mouse is hiding the trap and "is a-fixin'" to set it for me tonight, which is a typical Dark Duke twist. Apparently he doesn't know the verb tiptoe, for he only ~~uses~~ uses the first syllable, and when he departed, he grinned wide and said:

"When you're fixin' to take off your shoes tonight and thinkin' about a-headin' for bed, you better be sure you tip light about the house for that old mouse will sure enough have his trap all set by then."

My Mr. Brew returned for a few moments, and so I have the balance of your letter. The cippings go into the armchair for tomorrow's delectation. I am so glad to know what is going on in theatrical and literary circles. I hope the Martha Graham things aren't too ultra Picasso. I think her oriental dances are the most pleasing to my taste. That Rodgers and Hammerstein should have tossed off another opus, The Happy Time, seems nothing short of a record in speed. Dick Rodgers never struck me as being anything like Harnett Kane, but their volume seems suggestive of a common parent. The South African story sounds wonderful, and I am so glad you mentioned it, for often I reverse the card on cartons containing novels without ever taking them from the Post Office. I should not like to ~~miss~~ miss the one you mention.

And may I congratulate you on your remarkable memory. Yes, there are cottonwoods on the margin of Cane River at Arenbourg, but how you ever remembered that is remarkable. I shall spend much of the morrow at Arenbourg, for Melrose doesn't need me in the bamboo department and I am bound to stir things about with a stick where the Opelousas Pinks are doing business. So glad you are to see Katherine Cornell, - she is so splendid and the subject sounds elegant.....

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Tuesday, January 24th, 1950.

Memorandum:

From were I sit, we appear to be up to our hips in summer. With all doors open the balmy breeze from the South is blowing tons of perfume from the Chinese magnolias through Yucca, and a pretty moon tempts me to trudge up the road for a little turn before calling it a day.

And it has been a pleasant day, quite aside from the delicious weather, for I was busy from first day until dark, and although a little tired physically I seem ready for communing with the stars before folding up my beard.

I had a good go at things in various sections of Arenbourg, and it is pleasant to report that thus far the new camellias and gardenias are looking as pert as possible. Perhaps they will be able to get well established before the inevitable "winter swoops down" and ruins other foolish trees and bushes that seem to be going ahead, regardless of the calendar, just as though Spring had arrived.

It turned more men than I had anticipated into the bamboo this morning, perhaps a dozen or more. But those who had labored yesterday should have known the ropes and so be able to acquaint their new associates with the mysteries of the doings. But whether they did or not, I didn't care, for I had determined on Arenbourg, and Arenbourg it was that received my attention.

This afternoon, right after dinner, I had some Orinoco banana roots set out at the North East and North West corners of the African House. The Orinocos are the larger variety, you may recall. It has always seemed to me that anything so definitely African should have a suggestion of banana plants in its neighborhood, and this summer we shall see what the effect may be.

People came from Washington, D. C. by appointment, and some other folks from South Louisiana and some from town, but I gave them scant time, for quite unexpectedly Mrs. Holloman and her sister arrived, and I wanted to devote most of the afternoon to them. We didn't get much dictation done but I did learn quite a few things of interest about New Orleans doings and various efforts being made to track down additional particulars about the Black Swan, etc. I also wanted to give some other letters for

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data covering Augustin Metoyer's mother. Some rumor once had it that as a slave she had belonged to St. Denis, and I have sent off inquiries to various places where data regarding the property of St. Denis might still be extant. I think most of the early French grants to property in this area, turned over to the Spanish in 1763, were moved to Pensacola, Florida, the Spanish chief repository in colonial times, and were never turned back to the French when Louisiana went back to the French. It is my understanding they were transported first to Havana and thence to Segovia, Spain where the college or monastery where they were housed was destroyed by fire during the scuffling that went on in Spring in the 1930's, perhaps 1937. Still there is always a chance that some family papers may be uncovered, and these we shall pursue.

Mrs. Holloman saw Miss Alberta on Saturday or Sunday. I understand she saw Postell, too. You will be amused to learn that little Miss Alberta confided to Mrs. Holloman that I am an atheist. Little Miss A. is such an understanding soul.

As for the enclosure, you will enjoy Mary's letter. Her review of Alice's book has an interesting slant. I can't subscribe to all her ideas, but I find she expresses them interestingly. Somehow there seemed to be a shade of conservatism I hadn't expected.

I must say it does seem rather long since I wrote her inquiring about Mrs. Brandon, but I don't blame her for not writing, she has such a busy day forever confronting her. I don't know how she got the idea I did the telephoning the other day, but apparently the fact that telephone connection had been established as between Roane and me, did have an effect.

I can't subscribe to her position that one shouldn't discuss the curious doings in Natchez merely because one knoww its people and has family connections there. On that theory, the Southern Congressmen would be justified in forbidding anyone to discuss lynching, since only those living in the hill-billy sections of Georgia or Tennessee should be entitled to discuss man's inhumanity to man except in spots where such crimes against civilization take place.

And if, as was so much the case in Natchez, the local residents set themselves up as something extra special for the rest of the world to admire, then they should be the last ones to object if people did stop to examine them a little. Of course what really is killing them is that one of their own fellows has had the courage and good sense to set them out as they really are. I haven't seen anything about Alice's book, of course, and so have no means of knowing anything as to its value, but if she did give some of those stuffed shirts a good going over, I am all in favor of that part of it.

Yucca and little Y

ucca,--

4044

Wednesday, January 25th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Again it's Arenbourg's birthday.

Somehow I don't seem to get much of a kick out of a social frolic among human being but I never seem to tire of Arenbourg's anniversaries, and whenever the slightest excuse obtains, whether it be some strain of music like The Waltz of the Flowers or merely an impulse to dig in the ground, I find myself in the midst of my own doings, but going full swing, and liking it.

Be that as it may, I heard tractors going full tilt in the direction of the old Jean Baptiste Metoyer plantation, across the river and just below St. Augustin's yesterday morning. One of the Melrose tractor drivers told me it looked as though the Jones people who now own the place, were ploughing in the spot near the house where once a lovely garden had been cultivated from the time Grandpere's twin sister had lived on the place and where the largest of the mulatto houses had stood until a few years ago. No much had survived the devastation of the years, but I did remember to ancient gardenia bushes, and so I galloped over to ask if they would care to sell these. They would. It is wonderful how people are willing to sell something if somebody else will only stay the owner's ploughs long enough to rescue the thing from utter eradication.

It wasn't the best type of weather obtaining for transplanting, what with the unusual warm weather continuing and a spanking breeze from the Gulf. I don't know if these old bushes even have a ghost of a chance, what with the sap up when it should be down and the drying breeze blowing so lustily. But then I remembered Mr. Bachelier's sage admonition: "The time to transplate is when you are ready, regardless of the season", - and while I can't subscribe to this in every instance, still here was an emergency.

And so I dug the plants and transported them to the terrace at Arenbourg, trimming them back severely so that the root system wouldn't feel too great a strain on it commissary department to supply food at a time when normally the bushes would be dormant. It seemed to me worth the chance, however, and while there probably is nothing very special about the flowers that may develop, still they will be of the old fashioned variety, and sentimentally it will be pleasant to have these fragrant

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reminders of an ante bellum garden of the Metoyers blooming on down through the middle of the 20th century.

A rather heavy mail today, made up to a large extent of trash, impelled me to do a bit of trash basket dumping, and I notice I inadvertently disposed of a letter from Robina which I intended sending along. It covered nothing of particular interest, except that she said she had had a letter from 81 Charlotte Street, thanking her for a Christmas gift, - pleasantly surprising since she had sent neither a gift nor a card. Gertrude Roberts Smith said that she heard from little Cammie from time to time and that as she was exactly like her Mother and therefore capable of acquainting her with all news about Melrose, she doesn't write me, now that the Madam has gone, knowing that it would be difficult for me to find anybody to read a letter. Don't you love all that. I have written G. R. S. perhaps four or five times since November of a year ago but as I have never had a response, I have let the contact lapse. It is heartening to know she gets adequate particulars about Melrose from Sister, and so relieve me of the pleasure and responsibility I had experienced in the past in regard to 81 Charlotte.

In the literary department, I have finished with the Dumas Malone opus and am impatient to know when the next volume, devoted to Jefferson's European experiences, is scheduled for publication. This first volume is really excellent and more complete than anything I have ever read before. In this book, one is conscious of a degree of sadness that must have permeated Jefferson's life that other biographies seem to have given less emphasis. Malone points out that in building Monticello, Jefferson's expenditures were well within the bounds of wisdom in so far as his personal fortune at the time was concerned, for his own inheritance, plus that of his wife's, provided him with ample means for such an undertaking. But because of the melting away of the Virginia currency values following the Revolution, plus the fact that due to some legal twist, he had to pay twice for certain debts that caught up with his wife's estate, his financial burdens from the 1770's were always pressing. And then there was the extremely painful scandal centering around extra marital relations, prior to his marriage; in connection with the wife of one of his neighbors, which tormented him all during his Presidential years. Jefferson affirmed the relationship as having taken place prior to his own marriage, but the bag in the case, who must have been a terrific bag to bring the matter up not at the time but only after Jefferson had become Minister to France.....these and his own deep affection for Mrs. Jefferson and for his children, must have constantly kept a cloud on his otherwise serene horizon.

Grandpa has been knocking at the screen door and so I have responded with a saucer of milk. And through wat is left of the bamboo hedge, I notice a light shining from the windows of the house across the fence, so the Memphis hejir must be concluded.....

4046

Thursday, January 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I wonder if summer can really be coming to a close at long last. Tonight the static was so tremendous I couldn't hear any of the local stations, indicating, I assume, that the cold front which passed Arkansas yesterday but got stalled above Shreveport, may actually be breaking through. I shall believe winter when it arrives, however, for the thermometer remained in the 80's today, and among other things, the banana plants which shouldn't bat an eye last before mid March are already up a foot or more. It is all so confusing.

My morning was busy, and as usual on Thursday, it was broken in half by the advent of Dr. Knipmayer. I had hoped he could read a letter for me, - from Miss Nellie, which none of my secretaries could decipher. But just as we tried to unravel it, Celeste dropped by with one of her local prelates, Father Colvard or some such, and so Miss Nellie's epistle will have to wait.

Celeste took off again this noon for Mansura, but will be back sometime Friday.

Everything seemed lovely in Memphis but I heard no news of interest. Dr. Knipmayer remarked that the New Orleans paper reported that J. A.'s name topped the list of something or other about the Cotton Council, but so far as I know, that isn't news, for he is on so many Federal Boards that a half dozen more or less wouldn't reveal anything unusual.

I sampled another book last night, and liked what I read. It is "Civilization on Trial" by Arnold J. Toynbee, or some such name. I wish old Xenophon would pay attention to my suggestion and have the name of the title and author spelled out.

I shall not attempt to retail what I have read thus far but I shall remark on a point or two that I think interesting, such as the fact, as he points out, that Science has established that man has lived on the earth at least 600,000 years, and yet during only 5 thousand years does there appear to have been anything like what we style civilization. What in the world was going on during the other 595,000 years, --if anything. Of course I realize that 595,000 years and a nickle might buy one a cup of coffee, but still I find speculating on such matters to my liking.

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Dr. Toynbee, if that's the way it is spelled, thinks that in the final consideration of life, about the only thing that really matters much is religion. He thinks that all of the 15 or 20 civilizations the world has known, all of them have cracked up and gone to pot as a result of the various grades of society, the various classes they developed, which, in the end, tore them to pieces. He says it is a misfortune we don't know a little bit about the religious of other peoples, and he feels that the vast number of people living under the sign of Islam may eventually give the wheel of civilization another turn, after Western Civilization has played out. He says that one thing about the people in Islam, they are not race conscious, and what with race and class consciousness being so prominent in our own contemporary civilization, it may be that in the end, we shall break down on that score, - unless we can take a page from Islam and try to eradicate such "holier than thou" attitudes.

Eventually, perhaps, all the Church-goers will suddenly drop dogma and start practicing religious, and then the end of the story will be different.

As I contemplated such business, the Dark Duke tapped at my window. He was on his way to the honkey-tonk but had stopped off for a few moments to say Howdy. I wished for a tape recording. For we fell to talking about animals, and it was but a step to Emma, and how readily one may talk with a mule persuasively and effect all kinds of miracles through the sympathy the voice establishes between mule and man. He went into some detail explaining how the animal without sensing what is required, will get off on the wrong foot, and how the muscles in the flanks will begin to quiver to show mounting nervousness, and possibly fear of an impending beating, when becoming conscious that whatever it is that is being done, isn't being carried out according to the master's wishes. I was fascinated by the direct quotes, as to tone and words to be employed in eliminating the animal's nervousness and conveying the idea as to what precisely is desired. The performance was so convincing that I could readily envision myself as the mule and perfectly willing to stand on my head, so soothing and convincing and re-assuring was the monologue. Except for Archibald Rutledge's Prince and my Dark Duke, I know of no other individuals whose peculiar gifts were so marvelously fashioned for this vanishing breed of horse power, so fast fading from the earth.

I had several telephone calls today from Matchitoches and Alexandria, people asking if they might pass by on the morrow to see the magnolias. They are at their peak of perfection, and if a breeze rises tonight, their cloudy beauty will be strewn all over the place, but on the ground and definitely not on the branches.....

4048

Friday, January 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A typical winter's day in Louisiana, - cloudy, chilly and altogether charming when viewed from the inside looking out.

The thermometer dropped 40 degrees from yesterday's 80, and what with the sun heavily veiled, the grass looks twice as green and the Chinese magnolias twice as white or pink or purple.

I had apportioned my day well in advance, and of course nothing at all dovetailed according to schedule. But in the end, the routine, although out of joint, came to a satisfactory conclusion, and now I am pleasantly tired and sleepy, and what with this little conversation and the promise of a turn on the disks with Dr. Toynbee, I shall fold up my beard and sleep ere long.

I made a short round at Arenbourg before breakfast, planning to make a second round after bacon and eggs, but I found a half dozen workmen waiting for me, anxious to be given an opportunity to make motions at work. Before I had time to skip to the Post Office with the mail, Mrs. Coombs dropped by, bringing several garments for children that she thought I might be able to dispose of. Appointments for morning pilgrims were cancelled, and I devoted myself to planting, transplanting, digging up and cutting out a billion things long over due.

After dinner a flock of people, shunted from the morning schedule, arrived. I was glad to see Mrs. Peyton Cunningham again. But we had scant opportunity to compare notes, what with other people arriving. Mrs. Cunningham is a descendant of Benjamin Metoyer, brother of Thomas, - grandpere's papa, and we always have fun talking about her distinguished colored cousins. It was her daughter, you may recall, who figured on the circular staircase in the Aswelll article in Collier's.

The political side of Louisiana got a showing in the persons of Mrs. Albert Fredericks, wife of Governor Long's Secretary, and Mrs. Dodd and her son, wife and child of the present Lieutenant Governor. The younger Dodd had a fixation of Grandpa and Grandpa adores children, and so the combination was perfect, and Grandpa was toated all over the place, through the big house, the African House, Yucca and Heaven knows where all. And both toater and toated seemed to love it.

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Education was prepresented in the persons of Dr. and Mrs. McGinty, or however the President of the College spells his name. He and his wife asked if they might come down some afternoon soon when there weren't so many guests. I said I would telephone. That will put them off until Spring breaks through, and in the mean time I want to do gardening and a couple of billion other things.

And on the social side there were people from Alexandria, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, but I didn't even both to have them sign the Guest Book, for another flock of Ethiopians had arrived, armed with briar knives, axes, swords and spades, and I cut the pilgrimage business short in favor of planting.

It doesn't necessarily mean anything, but it is worth noting what the merchant planter asked me at supper tonight about renewing a passport. He said he understood round trip tickets to Europe are selling at \$400.00 and planes are flying half empty. I shall not be surprised to hear of a London or Paris week end one of these days. I think I have not thanked you again for the very interesting clippings in your last letter. The Peter Jefferson Prayer Book was so timely, in view of the Malone study. I must ask Miss Nellie about Thomas Jefferson's wife and her relationship, the lady being a Wailes, for Miss Nellie's family were from the Southern Maryland and Northern Virginia counties. I thought of a possible family contact when reading of Mr. Jefferson's relations with banker Morris, for whom Levin Wailes at that period was fixing to do surveying of the 3,000,000 acre tract in Georgia.

In the doings at Beloeil, I failed to find any reference to the black tiara as reportedly worn by the Empress Zita.

I am glad to have the clipping on the Carl Van Vechten gift to Yale. I hadn't thought of that man in years, and I think I never read anything of his except, possibly, The Blind Bow Boy, and I don't seem to remember much about that except that it had as style reminding me of The Portrait of Dorian Gray. I liked the point the President of Fiske made, in stressing the need to consider the achievements of people of color, not so much on a racial basis as on an American.

I enclose a copy of the letter written by one of Grandpere's descendants about Grandpere hailing from Haiti. So sorry to disappoint the lady, for Grandpere's birth certificate, or rather his baptismal entry was made in Natchitoches Parish.

One glance at my leather desk clock with little old Yucca in between, and something tells me it is Tender Leaf time, after which we fold....

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Sunday, January 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The Shreveport Weather Bureau says the thermometer will drop about 60 degrees between 9 and 10 tonight, and I certainly hope they could be wrong again.

I write a little after 8. The sky is cloudless with a big round moon gilding sun dial and bamboo. I guess it must be about 80, as it has been all day. It is difficult to imagine a 20 degree reading within a couple of hours from now, and I shudder when I contemplate what will happen to the foolish plants and trees, so many of which are putting out their tender new Spring leaves.

If memory serves, it snowed all day last year on this final Sunday in January. But it is difficult to imagine the thing as being possible to repeat itself under present circumstances.

In anticipation of the blast, however, I did quite a bit of wrapping things up at Arenbourg about dark tonight. I hope the poor things don't smother before the cold arrives. The Yucca living room and boudoir are a bower of flowers tonight, for thinking I would get ahead of Jack Frost, I picked armfuls of sweet olive, marcissus, jonquills, camellias, etc. The joke will be on me if again a hot blast from the Gulf drives the cold front back to Oklahoma or where ever.

In view of the wreck that the frost will make of the Chinese magnolias, I was a little more liberal about letting in pilgrims this Sunday, for it seems imperative that one should share such beauty with everyone who cares enough about it to come.

The Hunter Piersons of Alexandria were here. They asked me if I had heard that the Colonial Dames want to join with the D. A. R. in carrying out the Alexandria Project. I hadn't.

Dr. Nelson was up from Lafayette, having asked if he might come and record the magnolia blossoms on film. He could. Dr. Fletcher, President of Southwestern State College, was here, too. I was glad to see him again, for the last time I met him. Dr. Fletcher was but one of several interesting people here at the time, including Birgham Young's grandson, and so I hoped I would have an opportunity to chat with him today, but of course, I never did, what with so many other people passing this way at the same time.

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Dr. Fletcher and Dr. Nelson had dined with Dr. and Mrs. Rand. They said Dr. Rand was able to get to the dinner table, - a piece of news that of course delighted me.

It was dark before the last of the pilgrims were gone, and some of them got little evidence of Southern hospitality, what with Arenbourg getting some of my attention before first dark arrived.

Pat came up from Baton Rouge Saturday afternoon, and he and I dined with Celeste this noon. But right after dinner, all the Henrys flew to town, as usual, and so I didn't enjoy much moral support on the receiving line.

It goes without saying that I didn't get much reading done this Sunday, and what with a slight headache tonight, I think I shall not attempt much exertion in that direction tonight. I did read a little from Arnold Toynbee's "Civilization last night." He expressed the opinion that the two great imponderables weighing heavy on the shoulders of the English speaking world and practically non-existent in the Islam world are racial segregation or cast systems and alcoholism. He finds these perhaps two of the greatest weaknesses in the one camp and the two elements possibly holding the greatest promise of future felicity in the other. He admits that it is almost impossible to envision Islam as contributing much to civilization within the immediate future, and yet he reminds the reader that it was the Greeks and Romans who asked: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth".

I was a little growsey while reading one of his chapters on Soviet Russia, but perhaps I shall dip into it again. Somehow between what he had to say and what I had to think while "wool-gathering" was this: - that Russia inclines more toward being oriental and occidental and twice has had to turn to the West to incorporate a scientific "know-how" into her ways of doing things to bring herself up to a par with the dominant powers of the world, - first under Peter the Great, and once under Lenine. The question automatically rises in my mind, now that she apparently has swallowed four hundred million Chinese orientals to boot, will the Soviet or Russian peoples always incline to be just about one step or more behind the other great powers when it comes, - if ever it must, to a show-down as to which type of civilization is going to come out on top. Personally I have always had a feeling that there is a vast weakness behind all the racket issuing from the Kremlin, and while Russia has manifested an enormous ability to take punishment, I don't recall that she has ever demonstrated much ability in the last couple of hundred years to take on any body her own size.

I knew at the outset this note would be dull. It turns out even more so than was to be expected. Perhaps I shall improve on the morrow. Let's

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Monday, January 30th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Friday letter in this morning's post.

Perhaps I should begin by saying that, as usual for January, 1950, I went to the Post Office, according to schedule, without coat or sweater. For in spite of all the talk and dire warnings on yesterday's radio programs, the cold snap never did break through to the Cane River country, and before dawn really got under way this morning, I streaked up to Arenbourg to unwrap the camellias and gardenias in hopes of saving them from being stifled in all their winter wrappings. Today's thermometer readings have continued in the 70's or 80's, and the Weather Bureau didn't even apologize for having frightened the cape jessamine into their long red flannels to no point.

I am so glad you enjoyed Martha Graham's performance. I think I shall ask the college if she is scheduled to appear in Natchitoches again this year, and if so, I shall invite her down before she makes her appearance. If she should be listed for an appearance during the Spring, I shall possibly be able to arrange birthday parties for the African House and Yucca, for it should celebrate its 200th anniversary with some kind of festivities some time this year. What I hope to do is to have a Primitive Show "rigged up" in advance of whatever the celebration may turn out to be, and thus acquaint the guests with an aspect of local Art which many of them still know nothing about.

And may I thank you for your kindness in sending along the Lexington Avenue address of the Blessed Martin Guild. I find your suggestion excellent, -- concerning the doings that may arise as a result of the consecration exercises. I shall take this occasion to inquire if the Guild has any branches in Louisiana and possibly something interesting may come from that. New Orleans has plenty of black nuns but I know not if the Blessed Martin has any devotees, - outside myself, - in the Gulf area.

I thought of you on Friday night, hoping your little annual get together was a happy one. I like the idea of dinner at The White Turkey, the name is so suggestive of gumbo on Little River.

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*Audubon
Wailes*

I appreciate every particular you so generously passed along regarding your research covering the doings of Messrs Harris and Audubon along the Missouri where the doe's head was painted. I am equally enchanted to know that Levin and Rebecca Covington Wailes his wife, are also pictured in the Stanley Arthur book. I have the gravest doubts as to the probably fate of these Wailes sketches, for Miss "ellie, who never thought them sufficiently flattering, was inclined to feel they should never be displayed, and thus with her advancing years, it might well be surmised that they would disappear with her passing. It is doubtful if any of her Wailes kinfolk would appreciate them either as of historic value if not artistic triumphs. It is interesting that their caption in the Arthur book should indicate they were executed in Natchez, for in reality, as you know, they were tossed off at Washington, Miss., where the Wailes family was living at the time Levin got Audubon the job teaching at Elizabeth Female Academy, founded by the mistress of The Black Swan. It goes without saying that I am glad the reproductions in the Arthur precludes the loss of their likenesses, although it does seem a pity that the originals should currently find themselves in such a hazardous situation. The one of B. L. C. Wailes, you will recall, was used by Sydnor as a frontispiece in his *Gentlemen of Old Natchez*.

The "adam once tried to start negotiations with Miss Nellie with a view of purchasing the originals but the matter got to first base. I hoped that when Louisiana opened Oakley as an Audubon memorial, they might find a permanent place there, but that was doomed to disappointment, too, although Miss Nellie did consider loaning them at one time.

I think I once mentioned the splendid diary, kept by Mr. Gordon, Audubon's brother-in-law. I think the date is 1804, and covers among other things a journey Mr. Gordon made in company with Abijah Hunt, uncle of David Hunt, Mississippi's greatest planter. Abijah was a prominent merchant in Natchez in the period covered by the diary, and he and Mr. Gordon were traveling up the river from New Orleans, either by horseback or by boat by easy stages. Mr. Gordon goes into some detail regarding the refined hospitality extended them one night at a plantation on the Mississippi where they were entertained over night by a mulatto planter and his family, and how, before departing, Mr. Hunt asked his mulatto host if the latter would not permit his guest, Abijah, to take one of the mulatto's charming daughters with him, "to remain under his protection" at his home in the Natchez country. The father demurred. Some day I hope Mary Whitaker will let me borrow this diary, for it seems to me a pity that this very interesting intimate picture of early life on the lower Mississippi should be lost to posterity and denied circulation among people like us who find these sidelights on the old days so interesting.

Tonight the sky is again cloudless with a friendly fat moon enticing me to a little turn as far as Arenbourg and back before calling it a day. At supper somebody said a telephone conversation with Shreveport reports a cold spell obtaining there but here a warm, balmy breeze from the Gulf makes shirtsleeves the order of the day -- and night....

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Tuesday, January 31st, 1950.

Memorandum:

I wonder if I ever shared the enclosed poem, *The Wind and the Moon*, with you. I ran across it by chance today and at first thought, I envisioned the possibility that you might have made this copy for me. But then I discovered that you couldn't possibly have done so, since there is an error in the title, and you don't make errors. And so I conclude this must have been of my stirring, from some author, perhaps Eugene Field, and so I send it along on the chance you might enjoy running through it again, even as I did when running up on it quite unexpectedly.

I was straightening out a desk drawer during the moon hour when Murrel and the Dark Duke passed this way. I had Murrel read it. The Dark Duke liked it, -- "whosoever wrote it made the words match so good".

A half dozen gardeners fell into my lap this morning and as these occasions are rare, I devoted myself to local doings all day. For the most part, I kept them busy moving bulb things, narcissus, lilies, etc. Heaven knows it is a mighty poor time to move narcissus, but the day lily and milk and wine lily sections will find the move to their liking. I made borders along the brick walk immediately in front of the big house and around the towers. My motive was less for the decorative scheme but more to concentrate some of these items which, for lack of fore-thought when planting, the Mistress had often just stuck this bulb or that in the ground where ever there chanced to be a vacant inch of unoccupied soil, with the result that while attractive as a "mille fleur" design, they never did bloom at the same time, and never did bloom at all, for the most part, since untutored haymakers would attack the weeds in the garden with abandon, and the prospective flowers wouldn't get much of a chance to ever come into flower. Now, at last, there is a bit of greensward where the mowers can mow grass, while the lilies may equally have a belated chance at bursting into bloom before getting their heads clopped.

And as though I didn't have enough to occupy my attention, -- giving constant "encouragement" to my "utopian helpers, I decided at the same time that a chest of draws (interruption -- should be cleaned. Neatly I stacked the big old draws on the old

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bench on the front gallery, each brimming over with billions of "tresors", with a view to removing each separate item with gentle and loving care, - especially a stack of ancient stained glass window panes, etc. But Grandpa and Little Grandpa had other ideas, for no sooner did I turn my back that I heard a terrific crash, and glancing back saw "tresors" and cats alike, flying in all directions. The gallery was a mess, but I left it just as it was for the balance of the day, and only at first drak did I take time to gather up the perishables. The balance sits where it fell on the brick pavement, and a mighty disordered looking heap of trash it looks in the prevailing moonlight of the moment.

I was lucky in having no pilgrims until nearly 5, when Rosalyn Aswell came by to see me. She had a Mrs. Wylie with her, and Mrs. Wylie seemed to be a friend of Miss Robina, and so our little contact, although limited in time, was pleasant while it lasted.

Rosalyn was entranced at the appearance of the fading Chinese magnolias. She wants to try painting them. I invited her down for the day and perhaps she will come later in the week. Van Gogh is her favorite artist and she has in mind doing something vaguely suggestive of his simpler flower of arrangements. She envisioned a single stem of magnolias, perhaps not more than two blossoms, a little on the purple side for coloring, and only that and a turquoise vase or some such. I hope she really responds to her impulse, and the field of Art might find another jewel in its treasury.

And speaking of pictures, reminds me of a couple of photographs I stumbled over today in the hurly-burly of pushing some historical Quarterlies around in the library of the bi house. Imagine my utter astonishment when those two items which gave me so many bad weeks and years suddenly came into view, -- those photographs about which I had had such a struggle with various Natchez correspondents about. Of course how these items ever got into such an unexpected place, I have but the vaguest notion. Still, I am naturally entranced at having discovered them, and so will be able to head them back across the Mississippi forthwith.

A note from Mrs. Holloman indicates she is still scuffling around with the mulattoes, and expects to entice her husband to explore certain Natchitoches records in the Court House one day this week. The Picayune has already advised her that Cane River civilization lends itself to an article for some historical journal but not for Picayune publication, as the subject matter is of but limited interest for its readers. But she doesn't seem to realize this is a polite way of telling her they will not publish an article about people of color. I guess we shall be lucky if we are able to squeeze through anything about the Black Swan.....

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Wednesday, February 1st, 1950.

Memorandum:

I guess the cold snap must have struck us, for this morning it was a delicious 50 while the radio was talking about net works of power lines in the Dallas area which had been snapped and splintered by the ice sheet descending on that area during the night.

The mist and rain in these parts made visions of such a situation easily imaginable, but with the promise of South winds from the Gulf tonight and tomorrow for this section, summer will undoubtedly be back again with the dawn.

Rather early this morning I had several visitors, each looking for the other and never, apparently catching up with the endless chain. An old Cane River resident had died, one Richard Sapp, aged 87, a negro who, strangely enough, owned his own little 30 or 40 acres. I guess he has 8 or 10 children, one of his daughters being the wife of my friend, Dee-dee (Robert Anthony) of "Little River". If placed end to end, so to speak, the grandchildren and great grandchildren ought to reach from Richard's cabin just below Clemence's, slap to St. Mary's on the Bayou, 2 or 3 miles away, where, I suppose the funeral will be celebrated. According to the latest plans, the services will be held next Sunday, after which the body will be "deposited", - as the negroes say, - in the Little River graveyard, hard by St. Mary's.

Last Thursday Dr. Knipmayer told me Richard didn't have a Chinaman's chance to survive - diabetes and senility. Dr. K. had quite a harrowing tale to tell about the attempts to get Richard attended to over a period of six weeks. One of his sons, - Fellow, - telephoned Dr. Knipmayer, or called at the Thursday clinic, to inquire about an appointment for his father. Dr. K. told Fellow to bring Richard, - who had to be carried from the car to the office, - on any day of the week except Saturday afternoon. Richard accordingly put in an appearance in Fellow's arms at Dr. K.'s office on Christmas Eve, when the place was closed - Christmas Eve, being among other things, on Saturday. And so Richard was toated back to "elrose" and was hauled back to Natchitoches again on the following Saturday night, - New Year's Eve. The following week, after receiving a letter from Dr. Knipmayer recommending Wednesday or Friday, Richard was brought in again on late Saturday afternoon.

Then, the following week, a son from New Orleans telephoned to ask if papa couldn't be

3204

4057

sent to the Charity Hospital in Alexandria. Dr. K. made out the required papers and off to Alexandria they toated the much traveled Richard. But by this time, and manifesting unusually good sense, I thought, Richard flew into a rage when arriving at the Charity Hospital for he had decided dying at home would be pleasanter. His fury was such that Fellow asked if the Charity Hospital couldn't send Richard over to the Asylum for mental cases across the block. That was done; but the mental institution trotted out their rules which clearly states a patient, to be admitted, must be armed with a paper, not from the Parish Health head, but from the Coroner. This paper they did not have, and so back to Melrose came poor Richard.

Well, at least, in the end, he got what he wanted, and Sunday ought to make possible a fine funeral, and Saturday night an even bigger and better wake. --after which 8 or 10 children will start squabbling over the 30 or 40 acres, and in the end they will fall into patchwork quilt of Mr. Hyman's designs or the more gracious and more expansive Melrose pattern.

Thus endth the story of Richard Sapp, and you will agree it is amply long, a little exhausting, and possibly slightly on the dull side.

I didn't accomplish too much today, what with the rain and the visitors, but after supper I did manage to finish "Civilization on Trial", and I like d Dr. Torynbee's philosophy. I guess my mind wandered a little along toward the end for I found myself envisioning what is going to happen one of these days when I step into a circle of people either all negroes or possibly some mental light weight pilgrims, - for either extreme of humanity would provide the best stage, and on taking my bow, I shall quite seriously and solemnly announce that "I am looking for God". Of course I realize everyone may turn and bolt, which will be alright, or someone may slip out and flag down a passing car to summon the Asylum, but if I get as many rides up and down the road as poor Richard, that will be a sort of recompense. The point of t the remark is based on the theory that in some people we discover quite a bit of the Devil, and in others quite a bit of God. And since my intentions would incline me to be more interested in the latter than the former, I think something really interesting might ensue, were such an unexpected statement to be made, don't you think so. I shall be careful, however, not to make such an announcement in the presence either of Madam Regard or Miss Sally, for both of them are so religion ridden of the cut and dried variety of formal religion, that either one or both of them might jump at my neck and smother me with fanatical adoration.

If this sin't among the poorer letters ever penned, then I give up. I'd better anyway, for Lloyd Gax Douglas, - The Big Fisherman, is aw aiting me on disks.....

4058

Thursday, February 2nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

And you, even as I, have heard a dozen radio announcers today set forth the fact that if the ground hog shall have seen his shadow, six weeks more of winter is due us.

The important word in that statement is "more", for if we get six weeks "more" of the sort of winter we have been experiencing up until now, then you might say that summer is actually upon us.

The drizzles continued in these parts, with only a second or so around noon for the inevitable gleam to shine forth and cast the shadow, after which the drizzles began again.

It has been fairly busy, however, in spite of the discouragement for outside activities obtaining. Early this morning some Little River friends arrived, saying they had been awakened by the ringing of the St. Augustine's bell on Little River, announcing the passing of a local resident. The man was Oscar Moody, possessed of as about an extensive a progeny as Richard Sapp. The funerals for both will be held on Sunday, it is said. With two wakes in the offing, Saturday night is bound to be a shambles.

The Knipmayers came by as is their custom, and in spite of the drizzle this afternoon Mrs. Rand came by with three ladies, one of whom was none other than Miss Kate Davis of Natchez who seems to me to be just as spry as ever, in spite of her 97 years. She had much gossip from Natchez but not so very much news. She remarked that Ferriday Byrnes whose height is about 5 feet, now tips the scales at 260 pounds, which sounds as though he might be styled a 5 by 5 man, any way you look at him.

She gave me one piece of news that was depressing, --the famous and perfectly delicious little old Lawyer's Row, where dwelt and practiced more celebrated legal lights of the ante bellum South than any other spot of like size in the nation is being torn down and converted into a parking lot. What a birthright, what a mess of potage.

Miss Kate asked me to come to Natchez and make her home my own while there. It was certainly kind of her but places to park seems to be the least of my needs to worry about as regards Natchez.

2201

4059

I read a little more from the Douglas opus last night, - The Big Fisherman, - and haven't discovered as yet why the book is popular. It reads along smoothly enough but after a hundred pages or so the lady I thought was destined to be the heroine, has been killed off and I don't find myself too much concerned with what happens to any character thus far presented. It is quite possible, however, that one of them may turn out to be the great gib angler in disguise, but even as the writers of detective stories have a way of doing, so Mr. Douglas seems to have contrived to pile up evidence that throws suspicion at no one or everyone, leaving the reader completely in the dark just as long as possible. I reckon a flock of people like that type of story but I don't. For it always seems to me a great waste of time to be forced to flounder around in the fog trying to determine which person is which, and not possibly be able to discover any identities until the last page. I shall perhaps find somebody who has read the book who may be able to tell me on which of the present characters I should focus my attention, and at the present stage of the tale, it would seem that a female character who has rigged herself up as a boy and has gone off to kill her own papa may be the individual who in the end shall be called Peter and thus have fooled me but completely.

I laughed to myself this afternoon at a little mix up in the Cane River Art world. Mrs. Rand left Miss Kate with me while she took a couple of her other guests down to see Clemence. While there she learned that a canvas she had stretched on a fine frame for Clemence had been disposed of, which must have been a surprise, since Mrs. Rand had contrived the thing with the request that a primitive be painted on it for herself. Clemence told her the thing was over at her daughter's home, - Jackie, who lives on the spillway bayou, - and later told her that I brought a friend down and the friend had taken the picture.

The truth of the matter is that when Helen and Carolyn were here, we drove down to Clemence's but did not find her at home. An hour later Clemence passed by this house, and shortly thereafter Mrs. Rand with guests arrived, and so the girls went down to Clemence's and thence back to Texas, --and I never saw them again. Later Clemence brought me a picture she had contrived at Helen's request, and this item I forwarded to Helen. I take it that that must be the item which really belong to Madam Rand. Isn't that a business to unravel.

Well, so much for such doings in this neighborhood. I am sorry to say that the butterfly lilies are up 8 inches or so, and that the bananas continue to climb. Just one good cold snap and the banana and butterfly business wont be worth a fig when the summer of 1950 rolls 'round. Do hope your season is better behaved and that all goes swimmingly in the reservoir department.....

1301

4060

Friday, February 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

The drizzles continue and what with the thermometer down to the mid 40's, it really seems like winter, even though the vegetation gives no suggestion of such a condition.

A note from Rudolph today indicates he will not be able to make it over this way during these mid term days of respite. He states his reasons as two:-

First the ice storms are so bad he feels he must remain at home where vast damage has been done his plants, a tree smashed, etc.,

and secondly, he is planning to put on or participate in another weaving show as of February 7th, and is bound to knock off some additional examples of his handiwork before that dead line.

He apologized for advising me of this situation at such a late date and hoped it didn't inconvenience me, the uncertainty about his plans. Frankly, I hadn't even supposed he would make it, but at the moment I can't think why I hadn't taken the matter into account.

I didn't need the enclosure. I shall respond there is no material in the "elrose library and that I shall not be going to town. One of these days, by the law of averages, the major and minor planets swirling around the second son are going to collide, and knowing both planets as I do, I certainly don't want to be among those present. The cleverness of the one and the unsuspecting unthinking attributes of the other might somehow result in a brush without sparks, but it seems to me it would be happier for everyone concerned if the one didn't willfully put herself in the proximity of the other. But for all I know, there may well be method in such madness.

Curiously enough, I haven't responded to Miss Nellie's letter from Vicksburg as yet. In the first place, I put the thing

4061

away so well that I have failed to recall its presence whenever anyone who might be able to decipher it passed this way. Then, too, I have heard such conflicting reports about the lady's plans, whereabouts and intentions, ranging from three different geographical localities as the site of her permanent home and where she has moved between one report and the next. Yesterday Miss Kate told me she had gone to Atlanta, while a letter today from her sister in that city speaks of her as having tentatively stopped in Vicksburg, prior to returning to Natchez before going to Georgia for the balance of the season. I think I shall write her in care of her sister, and so just let Chance and the letter catch up with her.

I was glad to see Mrs. Coombs who passed this way for a few minutes this noon. She told me of a group of colored men who attended the trade school formerly in town who are currently day laborers but want to become preachers, but who haven't the means of going through the upper grades to equip themselves with sufficient learning to read from the Bible without stumbling and to harangue a flock with sentences that are coherent. This group, being of a religious persuasion, have selected one or the other of the Biblical prophets as their mentor, and in fact have formed a little society among themselves, which they proudly style: "Children of the Profit".

And I'll bet they are, too.

Mrs. Coombs had an inspiration and communicated with the local school board, asking that she be given books of the upper grades when their physical condition made them no longer serviceable in the public schools. The law had to be stretched a little, for such books, torn or broken, are supposed to be destroyed, but if the word "Obsolete" were written across the title page in pencil, the impasse might be circumvented, and so a flock of books were acquired in the higher brackets of Grammar, etc., and all this of course delighted Mrs. Coombs and naturally enchanted the "Children of the Profit".

Earlier in the week I intended mentioning that I had stumbled over the final moments of a radio program on Sunday night along about 9 or 10 o'clock, perhaps 9:30, Central Time, which I believe was called "I Take Your Word" or some such. It reminded me of the Bob Trout show of last year, "Who Said That", and curiously enough one of the former participants in that program, - the present or latest ex- Mrs. Elliott Roosevelt was among those participating. You might sample it, if, indeed, you haven't already done so. Tonight I shall listen to Capitol Clockroom over Columbia which I like, even when the politicians interviewed annoy or frighten me with their stupidity. But I must get a flock of letter out before then, for I am behind schedule.

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4062

Sunday, February 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Full summer again and the forecast for tomorrow is Fair and Warmer.

And fair weather brought pilgrims, and what between the palid and tinted sections, I have been too busy for correspondence or reading.

The McCooks were here and after them some Natchitoches gentry, and then Ed and Horace Rand. And between times the ebb tide of the region, returning from the funeral of Richard Sapp.

Of all the chatter from the towns folk was a mere morsel, - a reported small announcement in a local paper that the scheduled Shakespearean performance of Taming of the Shrew had been canceled. That was brief enough, but it does have a seed of hilarity about it, in view of all that has gone before, don't you think.

The enclosure is of no especial interest, although I thought the vignette of Massachusettes in winter was pleasant, and it is always interesting to have impressions of Alice's opus. In view of the mounting doctor bills that accompany the vanishing eye sight of Alice's husband, I do hope the sales are impressive, regardless of the worth of the volume.

I did manage to toss off a few more pages of the Big Fisherman, and things seem to be gaining in momentum now that at long last, the fellow giving the book its title comes into view. In the end, I have no doubt, it will be clear why a quarter of the book had to be written about Arabia before one got over into the land of John, the Baptist, Jesus, Peter and the rest, but somehow at this stage of the game, I am reminded of those first couple of chapters in Gone With The Wind which, according to my understanding of the thing, were written at the publisher's request, long after the novel itself had been completed and submitted for publication. I must read the Mitchell book again sometime and see if, as I felt on the first reading, the opening chapters were the least interesting. A joke a paragraph in length lacks bang if a chapter is required to explain it in advance. The same idea pertains to a novel that requires a mountain of stuff before the main character ever makes his initial bow.

3304

4063

Death claimed a third old resident of the Cane River country on Saturday, - an uncle of Fugabou, Gustin Syriacque. He is said to have been between 70 and 80, and gave the impression of being in his 50's. His physique was superb, and his arms and shoulders particularly something that made him a bronzed Hercules. A worker in iron, it was he who made the andirons in Yucca's living room, the ones carrying the letters "L" and "S", fashioned years ago for Lyle. Somehow his passing brings to mind that old concept about the wisdom of always being ill if one wants to learn how to take care of one's self and live long, for Gustin surprised everyone by dying, for no one ever thought of his age. For years on end, everyone has expected such oldsters as Joe Rocque and Celine to pass out from month to month, and yet in their 90's they go right on ailing and living while Gustin, never sick a day in his life, just drops dead in the neighborhood of 75.

On occasion, I have heard Celine refer to Gustin as "a boy", which is understandable, what with her 20 years his senior, but there is something of the identical humor about it that came to the surface when Louis Maurer at 100 used to refer to Alfie in his mid 60's as "that boy".

The mention of funerals may have little to do with the movies, and yet there seems to be some relation, even though it be nothing more than the termination of the American cinema career of little Miss Bergman. I hear that case discussed or rather reported in news broadcasts and the whole thing seems odd. If only she might have borrowed the bachelor's bidet that once served Madame Metoyer. What with the Baptist Belt and Catholic Action screaming for a withdrawal of her films from theatres, it seems to me somebody ought to take to the air to forego the slapping of Bibles and to start enunciating a few gems from the teachings of Jesus. I suppose the High Priests of half a dozen denominations take a page from the Natchitoches reasoning about a presentation of Shakespeare, for surely if a negro were permitted to play the part of a negro on the stage of the college theatre, then all the negroes in Louisiana would be storming the Registrar's Office with a view to matriculating in the college. And if anyone should chance to see Miss Bergman's interpretation of Saint Joan, he or she will immediately rush and scurry about to beget a child out of wedlock. The big point of the Old Testament seemed to be Justice and the New Testament mercy, but contemporary sects seem to have forgotten both when it comes to modern application.

The Golden Rule was wonderful, and yet I sometimes think that even greater was the line: "Come, ye, who are heavily laden, and I will give you rest".....

4064

Lindsay letter

2/1/50

Memorandum:

How nice to find your nice note in today's post, together with the clipping covering the Southern hejira of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

Unless their plans are greatly altered, their path will lie too far to the Southward to include Melrose on their agenda. For some time the Natchez Garden Club has been writing, asking that they pass through the Bluff City, and one tentative plan called for them to motor from Natchez to San Antonio on a line that would take them through the Cane River country, but apparently, if the newspaper account is correct, they will follow a bee line from Tallahassee to Houston, passing through New Orleans. A week ago they would have enjoyed the Chinese magnolias but February will hold few flowers of any particular note, although Yucca and the African House might have made up for the absence of the floral department.

In view of the curious winter we have been having, camellias in Florida should be at their best about now, even as they are in Lafayette, Alexandria, Natchez, etc, and so their arrival at Madam Baker's ought to provide them with many a pleasant blossom, assuming that the Baker place, of which I never heard, hold ample camellias, as I have no doubt it does.

And speaking of travel, the local merchant planter told me today that he leaves on Thursday for a three week jaunt. Mexico was given as the place. How that will fit in with news in the letter last forwarded as an enclosure, - not the last, I guess, but next to the last, I know not. But what with a change of situations coming at this moment, it seems to hold much on which one might speculate, were one interested in such matters.

I took the couple of men I found absent from the Moody funeral today and set out a heap of bamboo along the margin of Cane River, - the East bank, between the bridge and the Rand Camp and a little beyond. J. H. suggested I take the same opportunity to set some out on Arenbourg, but naturally I demurred. For some reason bamboo seems almost

impossible to transplant successfully, but one it takes hold, nothing on earth will ever stop it, and I am looking for no Augean Stables. But between the bridge and the Rand Camp the bamboo will be decorative and pretty, assuming it ever does take, and should it ever start spreading, the best it can do is to jump the Rand trail into the cotton patch, and I am not at all worried about that. After all, the tractors ought to be able to control that, should it happen, and even if it should linger on, there at least would be no flowering shrubs whose existences would be jeopardized by the spread.

At Yucca, little ditches are being cut to drain off rain water from the eaves, preparatory to the jacking up of the house, the pouring of concrete trenches as a permanent foundation. I don't suppose operations will get under way until Mexico has been toured, but I am always in favor of having the ground in readiness well before a dozen stalwart Ethiopians begin getting all tangled up in a heap when brick and concrete start flying. I am also leveling the ground of the back gallery, so that when the brick arrive for the new pavement, all will be in readiness. Gradually, too, I push things around in what is to be the Chapel. I had the bale of yellow cotton, housed there for the last dozen years, and have placed it in the African House. Taking 500 pounds in weight from the floor wont make much difference when the jacks begin functioning, but every little bit helps, and I envision scant yellow in the eventual scheme of the Chapel, - mostly black and white, if possible.

The slothful qualities of the local D. A. R. organization becomes more apparent from day to day. I think I mentioned I communicated with the Regent some weeks ago, offering to provide the gals with particulars regarding the song and dance for the 13th, --new items that would appear in the local press that would acquaint residents of the region with news concerning the survey, so that cooperation might flow from non-members, and thus make the tabulation the easier and more complete. Up to the present writing, I haven't had a peep by way of response, and as the three Matchitoches papers go to press within the next day or so, it is obvious that nothing will be filed for publication in advance of the day I shall appear. The lethargy manifested in this insignificant instance is undoubtedly a tall-tale reason why we hear so much drum beating over the air and in the newspapers whenever some project is contemplated, such as War Bon Campaigns, etc., for if little old cells such as a D. A. R. organization can't ever stretch out its had to pick up something from a silver tray for its own benefit, how in the world can we suppose anything more remote would receive so much as the bat of an eyelash.

But enough of such business, and besides, little old Yucca is eyeing the coke department and I concur in the impulse, while shuffling a couple of pages about the Big Fisherman.....

Tuesday, February 7th, 1950.

Memorandum: Tuesday, February 7th, 1944

Safely tucked away in my armour is a registered item, arriving by the same post which brought a second letter bearing a Friday cancellation date. Seeing two secretaries were "fixin'" to head this way, I assigned the thinner letter to the less experienced reader, expecting momentarily the other would appear before we had completed it. I have waited an hour since the departure of the first, and as the second hasn't arrived, I assume he must have fallen in the cistern or the honkey-tonk, and so, with the fatter letter under key, I at least have the assurance of a pleasureable sitting on the morrow, whether the postman brings anything or not.

And may I hasten to congratulate you on having such bright eyes and deft judgement to discover some of the prints at this early date. Really, you are remarkable. You ask which of the ones mentioned seem to be the most important. Frankly, I don't know, since Chancellorsville is the only familiar name in the list. I am wondering if Argosy or some other shop or possibly the library might have a list of the prints made in this series. With Vicksburg and Gettysburg having been the two most telling battles of the war, so far as decisiveness is concerned, I suppose they may have been the most popular, and therefore the least likely to be found. We have the Vicksburg one, of course, and even though frayed and a little tattered at the edges, it will eventually lend itself for framing alright. That we should also have the Battle of Corinth impells me to assume that the number of different subjects may have been extensive, since Corinth, while important, probably wasn't a major battle. I am wondering if sufficient subjects were covered so that it might be possible to concentrate exclusively on battles fought in the Mississippi Valley, or its tributaries. And I am merely asking your opinion, since such a concentration of region might have especial interest if assembled with a concentration on that limited theatre of war.

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that may have been included in the list, I suppose Shiloh, - or however it is spelled, would be a top knoter. Mansfield, Louisiana, - a Federal defeat, may or may not have been, and it was from Mansfield, La., that Banks retreated to Grand Ecore, Natchitoches, "Arenbourg", Cloutierville and Alexandria. I don't imagine any of that campaign was included, since it shed no glory on the Federal armies. The capture of Natchez was such a walk-away that I suppose it never did get recorded, although it may have, and of course the capture of the Ports at the mouth of the Mississippi, - and I seem to have forgotten their names, should have been recorded pictorially, since they pretty much sealed up the West. I don't suppose old "Silver spoon" Butler's capture of New Orleans was depicted, either, although I wouldn't know for certain.

Forgive me for going into so much detail, but I feel the recitation of some of these names and the inquiry as to what you feel about the possibility, - if some of them do exist, - of making a concentration on the battles in the Mississippi Valley, - I have forgotten my subject, and so shall conclude by remarking that I shall welcome your opinion on such possibilities.

And you ask about "Fabulous New Orleans", and I may say that the Madam was looking for a copy to give someone, but I don't recall whom. I believe one of the children borrowed the Melrose copy last Christmas, or else, if returned to the shelves, it was put in some different place from which it usually stood. The 1936 edition, I assume, must be a first edition although I am not sure. Wasn't this re-issued a couple of years ago by the Basement Bookshop or some such in New Orleans, along about 1947.

I certainly enjoyed every word you had to tell me, and I appreciate the enclosures, including the review of Mme. Chestnut's book, all of which I shall get to examine on the morrow, along with the item, snugly awaiting a new day in my armoire.

Rosalyn Aswell telephoned this morning to ask if she might come either today or tomorrow to paint Chinese magnolias. As she didn't make it today, I assume I may see her tomorrow.

With the thermometer at 80, and the clover climbing, I devoted myself to much weed cutting at Arenbourg this morning, and considerable lawn mowing at Yucca around the sundial during the afternoon. Nemirovski's "Mouches d'Automne" is one thing but making hay in February is something else again.

But in spite of the heat, my day has been ever so pleasant, thanks to your kindness, both for what I have digested and what awaits me on the morrow....

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Wednesday, February 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times wouldn't half suffice to say how happy Arenbourg is over the prospect of its new birthday celebration. One thing or another has delayed the tractors from churning up things on the terrace, but something tells me it won't be long now. And I am contacting a couple of helpers to assist me in stirring up the earth around the pears and persimmons and generally setting half a dozen things to rights, - if possible before a cold wave hits us, - and assuming such an event might continue to skip, to get ahead of the resurgence of Spring which is of course already all over the place. And then, too, I have an idea that Arenbourg would welcome some Chinese magnolias, all the others having bowed before the rigors of weather as of yester-year, and I am anxious to see if we might experience better luck this go-round. As these must be planted when the leaves begin putting out, I had better get connections established with some source of supply immediately, for the local ones are in leaf, - and may get caught, while I am hoping that a supply house from further to the North may still have some that may still be within the ice belt. You may be sure I shall keep you advised, and may I thank you on Arenbourg's behalf for such an elegant birthday, and on my own hook for all the fun I shall have at the festivities, -- doings which somehow never seem to be accomplished in any solitary fashion but always in partnership with the unflinching spirit that always and ever attends me as I march up the road in that direction.

And may I say thanks, too, for all the fascinating bits of news you passed along, and may I thank you sincerely for your kindness in offering to make transcriptions of notes penned by hand with which I sometimes have to tussle. I have an idea Miss Nellie will be back on her machine eventually, but in the mean time, it will be grand to think of being able to pass the hand contrived items along for your puzzlement and clarification for my secretary.

It is so good to know that Standard Oil is back in his accustomed channels. What a wonderful story the events of his life for the past 20 years would make. I reckon he would never keep a diary, but if he did, wouldn't it be fascinating. But better than all that is the fact that he and his family must once more feel their feet on firmer ground, and let us hope that none of them will ever have to go through another period like the last ten years.

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I am glad to know that dinner went nicely at The White Turkey and that Miss Cornell was able to rise to a high level, even though the earlier part of the piece was slow in getting under way.

And how nice that the little girl friend's birthday party was a success. And I am truly glad everything seems to have been re-strung, and this time in harmony, in the Albert-Martha menage. As I think of their ups and downs and place it along side the Standard Oil interlude, and then contemplate what obviously is stirring in Dora's soul, that soul, by the way, always seems to get stirred about this season of the year, --I can only ponder on the wisdom of taking a long view of any episode in life, and by such a perspective, never get into a panic, -- I hope, -- about momentary flare-ups.

I am glad you mentioned the broadcast on F. D. R.'s birthday, for I missed it, and until you mentioned it, I did not know of the death of Helen Hayes' child. Having her on the program would have added much to it under any circumstances, but under the peculiar ones, it must have been wonderfully moving. I often wonder about news broadcasts, and how it is I remain so much in the dark about items, --so often the ones of real human interest, for come to think of it, the net works really seem to do very little on that particular branch of the news, and just the things that the majority of listeners, I should imagine, would be most interested in. For example, during the past week, and I guess almost every day for the time since December 5th, -- and possibly before, I have heard every announcer to a vast amount of speculating about what the coal situation was going to be within a week or so, what it was supposed that John L. Lewis might do, and whether the President would invoke the Taft Hartley Act, etc., etc., ad infinitum ad anseum, most of all the talk being speculation about some twist in a coal strike, -- a scarcely a word about the doings, joys and sorrows of human beings, except as such emotions are naturally a by-product of all those more mundane possibilities. I guess that must be one reason why Lowell Thomas may be so popular, for I must say he devotes more of his broadcasts to such aspects than anyone else I can think of off hand. And yet, with the days getting longer, the plantation sups later, and so from here on out I shall probably not hear him much until about next November.

So many other things you mentioned I want to refer to, but shall have to save them for another sitting. I hope the film based on the Colette story turned out alright. What with Dora remarking about the life expectancy of people in Natchez, surely Colette must be some kin to the Bluff City, for I'm sure she must be at least a million.

Rosalind Aswell came this afternoon to paint magnolias, and did quite a bit of work, and wants to return. She tells me James is on the water wagon. P

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Thursday, February 9th, 1950

Memorandum:

The rain began a little before day light and has continued in x spasms of varying intensity all day. It still sprinkles, and although cooler air suggests an eventual cessation, I should be surprised if we had another day or two of damp.

J. H. left for Mexico this morning and this afternoon the ladies from across the fence are in tow, presumably getting new hair-dos and facials so that they may be thus fortified as they head out for South Louisiana at the first suggestion of daen on the morrow. When Monday rolls around, and I head out for Natchitoches, I don't know who will entertain pilgrims. I am reminded of a saying of the Madam's when ever she was casting about for an excuse not to go some place or other:

"After all, somebody has to stay at home!"

From the enclosure you will note that Life sent me some advertising today and along with all the other stuff was this curious hole dappled card which may or may not mean something or other. I might say that my subscription seems to me coming in smoothly as usual, and my assistant could not find anything suggesting a date of expiration on this card. For all I know, one is supposed to hold the thing up and read some curious bit of information in the pattern made by the perforations. If you can make anything out of this hocus pokus, it will only go to prove that you are more in step with the latest wrinkles in modern office practice than I.

As for the other enclosure, you will find one or two paragraphs interesting. I like the sly lick at the Dormons and I must say in view of past performances, it is very much to the point.

I am reminded as a classic example of Caroline's ability to dwell indefinitely in the rarer ether of an instance often cited by the Adam. One sizzling ten days in July, Caroline spent at elrose, arriving from Briarwood in a car which had picked her up at her gate. She was wearing a light wash dress that required laundering daily, but Caroline, without

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so much as a comb or a toothbrush or a handkerchief, naturally never gave a thought for what she might drape about her person while her only garment was being washed and ironed. Every night one of the servants would stealthily remove Miss Carrie's dress from the Madam's room, where she slept, and between the hour little Miss Dormon had fold up at night and unfolded in the morning, the dress would be refreshed with a wash and a press, and the lady would don the thing on rising, never once during the ten days, and so far as I know, not until now, --ever realizing what had transpired to make her wardrobe adequate for the visit.

A couple of letters from Mrs. Holloman came to hand today. The one envelope contains a lot of stuff in reference to efforts she and her husband made in the Watchitoches records, establishing the location of the plantation of Louis Metoyer, formerly known as Yucca and now styled Melrose. When the legal mind really gets under way, it is terrific, don't you think so.

*Augustin
Coin-Coin*
I shall send some of this stuff along for your delectation as soon as I have had an opportunity to make a couple of notes. I am struck by the reference to "page after page of the slaves" belonging to Marie Therese, alias Coin-Coin, who, of course, was Augustin's mama. It seems there are some very precious records in the hand of St. Denis and others, kept in the vault, and one or more of these have to do with Coin-Coin, but since neither of the Hollomans could interpret them, their contents will not be explored until someone this coming week can be pushed into the vault for a few minutes.

This question of the racial status of Marie Therese becomes more fascinating and fabulous, for it is everybody's understanding that she was the black mother of Thomas Metoyer's children, and of course it had to be from a Congo native that the Yucca architecture came into flower in this remote region. And yet it seems strange indeed if this remarkable woman, - assuming her to be pure negro, should have held so much property and slaves in a land where few people of color owned any property and no record is extant of a pure African ever held any. Some place or other I have heard of a Therese, "daughter of the Indian hunter, Brevelle", --the phrase possibly being found in the American State papers, or some such ancient record. And yet if it should turn out that Augustin's mama was that lady, there would be no accounting at all for the Congo architecture, - and regardless of other considerations, there was most definitely African buildings erected slap here. Well, so the swirl of speculation goes on and eventually we may discover the missing link in the whole remarkable chain.

The Windsors got as close as Baton Rouge where Secretary Fredericks did the honors. Was it but a couple of weeks ago some of the Fredericks were here, and how time and the Windsors fly....

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Friday, February 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

There must have been a great flapping on my front gallery last night, for when I stepped out this morning to toss Grandpa and Little Grandpa their morning snack, Lo! Little Grandpa had had a visitation, and I guess there must be three or four cherubs nestling about her person.

I don't know if a cat is supposed to be predictable or not, but one thing is certain, Little Grandpa isn't. I may have mentioned on one or two occasions before, she has begotten her offspring atop the pillar supporting Celeste's front gallery. For remoteness and difficulty of reaching, that situation certainly took the cake. And I suppose just to show that she can be different, she has selected my front gallery where there is more traffic all day than any other spot within the confines of the "elrose gardens." When tidying up the gallery the other day, I momentarily placed a cardboard carton on the pew from Grandpere's original church, and big old yellow Grandpa immediately hopped in. And so I left the carton there, and put in a nest of yellow cotton, thinking a yellow cat on a yellow couch might look alluring. Of course Little Grandpa immediately had to share the same, and now that she has converted it into a maternity ward, poor old big Grandpa is perched for the night on the block of wood by my doorstep, and mother and children look as domestic as though they had occupied the apartment all their lives.

I must be quite alone on the plantation tonight, and it occurs to me that I have used the expression before, meaning I am really not alone but merely the solitary white person about. But there seems to be a special frolic in town tonight, and another at St. Mathews, and something or other down Magnolia way, which, from plans I heard expressed from various quarters today, most of the colored people were fixing to get their "footsies" into the big road, too. And so, I reckon, I am indeed alone, and, Brrrrrother, do I like it.

I suppose Celeste and Madam Regard got off by the danw's early light, for I saw no evidence of them around 7 o'clock when I pumped into Aurellia at the side gate. She chatted for a moment, --I wish there had been a wire recording, -- it was so quaint, so freighted with ponderous considerations and such a mixture of joy and satisfaction about one thing or another. She says she isn't going to move; that she isn't going to have a baby after all; that Bessie is going to have one in

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April or July, that the white gentleman is helping Bessie out, and that her (Aurellia's) main worry now is that the child may not be a girl, "cause I think little girls is so nice".

Aurellia, as the Madam might have pointed out, is a sight.

Well, so much for that situation.....

Yesterday morning Celeste asked for an appointment with me, to ask my opinion as to whether curtains should be secured for the big house upstairs. Nobody knows where the ones are the Madam knitted or rather wove, but an ordinary guess would probably place them in Shreveport. She wanted my opinion as to material. I recommended scrim as first choice or dotted Swiss for second. I gave her a hand at taking measurements. Half the family will fulminate madly when they are encountered. The other half will never even see them. In the mean time Celeste will have a lovely time ordering them in Alexandria and once they are hung, another slight twist in the original personality of the house, as from 1900 to 1948 will have transpired.

I assume in tomorrow's post or in Monday's I may expect to receive a line from the D. A. R. acquainting me with the time and place Monday's session is to be held. Those bags are really remarkable....and I'll bet a dollar to doughnuts they are so busy thinking up what they will have by way of a supper that the mere business of notifying the guest speaker will be but a detail which may or may not ever occur to them.

My old friend, Johnny Burden, of Detroit came to see me today. Johnny is Richard Sapp's grandson. He came down out of the Michigan snows for the funeral. I hadn't seen him in five or six years and as he has grown at least a foot since last I saw him, I didn't recognize him at first. When I knew him, he wasn't much more than 5 feet six or eight inches. In the mean time he has moved skyward. There were several other negroes here at the time Johnny came, and so I didn't get an opportunity to get many details about how he finds things in Detroit, for I feel it is never good to make comparisons before plantation negroes, what with the sorrow I always feel when one of them, thrilled by accounts of urban life, pulls up stakes and heads out for some metropolis or other, especially, as was the case today, when not one of the youths can read a word or have the vaguest notion about such things as simple arithmetic.

It seems to me the enclosure had something or other of interest in it, but it has been so long since I read it that I have forgotten. Oh, yes, the higher infant mortality of the very young being greater today than it was among the ante bellum slaves. I could do some speculating on that point, but fortunately for you, I must be near the end of this note, and thus you escape.....

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Sunday, February 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Full summer continues, hot to the mid 80's and humid to the point of occasional showers.

I talked with Dr. Rand this morning, and although he was in bed at the time, he expressed the opinion that he would be up and about the house before noon. He asked me if a letter had come to hand in Saturday's post from Dr. Mattas. I had received none. He said he had a letter from him earlier in the week, asking if he might be able to communicate with me at Melrose, and Dr. Rand had advised him affirmatively. The old doctor really must be getting more remarkable as he inches along toward a hundred, for I suppose he wants to contact me for data on his stupendous historical account of medicine.

Last night I did a little reading from Robert Sherwood's "Hopkins and Roosevelt", or probably the title is the other way around. I like the book.

Two particularly nice things about the present edition is the fact that Mr. Sherwood himself reads a Prologue which runs for 15 minutes, and he, in turn, is followed by Harry Hopkins, for in this edition is included a speech made by Mr. Hopkins to the users of Talking Books, recorded at the time the Federal project for manufacturing these machines was inaugurated. You will agree that by including the voices of these two men in this edition gives it a remarkably additional interest.

Disagregarding important points that may be discussed later, I shall remark upon my pleasure in running across familiar old names here and there in the section I have read thus far. And when I came across that of Howard Hunter who was later to succeed to the post as Director of W P A, I found myself for the first time considering the parallels between Howard and Harry. The author, for example, suggests that Mr. Hopkins personality must have reflected in part the religious enthusiasm of his mother, an ardent Methodist, and I remember Howard speaking of his father having been a minister, - a Baptist, if I remember right. Both men begot sons by their first marriages, and both men were divorced at least twice. Mr. Hopkins had great leanings toward the race track, while Howard Hunter so contrived his business as to always be in New Orleans during the January racing season, for he was a turf enthusiast, too. Both inclined toward liquor, and yet both were denied its use, since both suffered from stomach ailments. Perhaps these parallels aren't stiking, and yet it does seem a bit odd th t two men so intimately associated with each other,

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As for social doings along Cane River, in the colored section, Saturday night seems to have been something of a hurly-burly. My second secretary seems to have been in some kind of a scuffle, having been knocked down and kicked, while in another scuffle, Bookey had to be taken to the doctor to have a lip sewed up. Charles Turner hit Spirit in the head with a car crank, and Little Elam's mama unsuccessfully tired to enter "Cousin Lug's" house, armed with a revolver, the pistol toasting mama being the present wife of Sam Peace of whose doings you have read in The Friends of Joe Gilmore. I don't know why Peter didn't get tangled up in all this business, although he confessed to me this morning that he had whipped another youth, a stalwart number fully his size, in the road when the latter tried to conceal himself in a hedge as Peter was passing. I saw the limb which had been employed as a cudgel-switch, and in view of Peter's strength, I fancy the victim must be feeling a little sore today.

All this doings is in part the result of Payne Henry messing into plantation operations, for he has no sense in such matters, and accordingly always loves to put a finger in the pie whenever J. A. absents himself for a week or so. This week he notified all local honkey-toks they would have to remain closed on Sunday. This impelled everyone to get high enough on Saturday night to hold them over until Monday's dawn. It also has undoubtedly moved more far seeing rogues to set aside reserve libations for sale tonight, and if the place doesn't go into a tailspin before Monday rolls round, it will be remarkable.

I had a little note from Ora yesterday which Raynie brought down from town for me. She had written it Friday, but feared it might not reach me before too late, and so had sent it by messenger. She had heard I am alone on the plantation, and wanted to say that she would be glad to skip a couple of hours from the college library to slide down and pick me up for tomorrow's D. A. R. doings and take me home for supper with her and R. B., and then the two of them would bring me home. I thought it very nice of them, but I demurred, for transporation is the least of my problems, my chief worry being how I can best avoid ever making use of any.

Glenence came to see me Saturday. She said she didn't have any news but wanted to ask me something: -

"You sees, I was chawin' on a bone and I done broke my rack slap in two, and what I'se wonderin' is: Can sich a thing be kinda welded together or does it has to get a slap new one.... You see, me, I saved my 4 gold teefies, and what I was a-studyin' is that maybe I could trade them 4 for a whole new rack....."

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Monday, February 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The rains continued all night and the major portion of the day. Tonight a cold wind is blowing from the North, possibly foretelling the end of summer.

I can't imagine what twists may result from a cold snap. Already the ancient persimmon sprouts I had hoped to graft this year are so advanced with buds that grafting this year, I guess, will be impossible. And what will happen to the trees themselves, thus in full bud, once a freeze strikes them, I can't imagine for certain but can guess rather too closely.

There was no first class mail and I accordingly telephoned town to discover the magical hour this afternoon's meeting would be held. The hour reserved for the guest speaker was 3:45.

Celeste returned from New Iberia at noon. Some society or other to which she belongs was meeting at the Sutton home at 3, and as the D. A. R. pow-wow was scheduled for the college neighborhood, I had her drive me to the college library which I thought might afford me an excellent opportunity to say "Howdy" to Ora and to have a look at both the library and the campus. Ora did not chance to be in when I arrived, but I did linger long enough to chat with Eugene Watson, the head of the institution. After that I sauntered about the campus, for the sun, by some miracle, had come out momentarily. I examined the remaining three great columns that still remain as silent sentinels of the great house of Judge Bullard which had been built there prior to 1836. I wanted to get some notion of the situation as it must have appeared in ante bellum times and admire what is left of the grand perspective from this unusual elevation above the former Red River basin.

At 3:45 I put in an appearance and was immediately introduced. The speaker took the opportunity to make a rather more elaborate reference to Melrose and me than I had expected, and as though mail from good old Postell had been examined, mentioned the cultural influences set afoot during Mrs. Henry's life time, and how Melrose had now entered upon a third phase and how nobly the tradition of "rs. Henry was being expanded and perpetuated. On hearing this, I dismissed whatever opening line I might have used, had there not been such an elaborate introduction, and assured the audience, many of whom had

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known the Madam, that my appearance before such an august group was more of a break with tradition, so far as the Madam was concerned, what with her famous, if not notorious, avoidance of anything smacking of town or town meetings. This start seemed to get the proper reaction under way, and the speech ran along alright. About the only individual in the audience I knew was Rosalyn Aswell, and it was pleasant to have such an artist present for a talk about Art.

As was to have been expected, the Project was adopted, following a brief session of the organization, following my speech. A collation followed and a mighty good one it was. Celeste was waiting for me when I broke away from the throng, and we headed South.

She spoke of the pleasures of the past week end, and remarked upon her pleasure in receiving a Valentine greeting, albeit a little premature, from Quatorze today. In my role as Duc de Lauzun, I had to admit to myself that nothing came to me from Mme. de Montespan who, as you know, is a member of the royal entourage.

We stopped at first dark at Beaufort. Mme. Cloutier and Celeste had much to dish about, for the Cloutiers are recently back from South Louisiana. I was delighted to have an opportunity to talk with Mr. Cloutier, a grand person, and such attributes in spite of his vast business acumen and successful plantation operation on an extensive scale. I guess this is about the second time in my life I ever did chat with him and he asked if he might not come down to look over Yucda and the African House one of these days. Celeste and I were home by 7.

I want to read some more of the Roosevelt Hopkins book tonight, for I find it interesting, and especially as it not only gives so many interesting personal slants on people of the Administration but, for me, somehow fills in some of the blank spaces which scant newspaper reading during the 1940's left more or less void in my own understanding of operations on the Washington front.

In view of the complaint of Mrs. Nesbitt about Mr. Hopkins and his strange demands for curious food combinations, I was interested to find a reference in a private note of Mr. Hopkins, stating from Warm Springs that the food there was as bad as that in "the W. H. menage". I was further interested to read Robert Sherwood's remark that White House food wasn't so bad when "the chef" stuck to plain dishes but that it left much to be desired when mere fanciful attempts were undertaken. I don't recall if Mrs. Nesbitt ever mentioned Mr. Sherwood, although vaguely it seems to me there was some reference to table clothes that had been pretty badly mangled by all night workers on speeches for the President.

Forgive the length of this book review. And pardon me while

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Tuesday, February 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

With a brisk breeze blowing and the thermometer in the 40's, the banana and butterfly lily leaves look pitifully out of order, which, indeed, they are.

Errant Mr. Brew turned up today, - the first I had seen him since Friday. Fortunately mail has been scant and my Mr. Murrell Williams could manage it alright.

I asked Mr. Brew about the signs of Spring as are reported as being in surprising evidence among the piscatorial inhabitants of Cane River. He told me he fell in the river yesterday while engaged in capturing them, for while local citizens are using hook and line, they really aren't fishing at all, for there is such a concentration of these dwellers of the deep, - and usually in the neighborhood of the spillway, that one merely throws in a line with an unbaited hook, jerking the line out after it has disappeared a foot or so below the surface, and the hook catches a prize at almost any place along the body, - usually in the gills, but not always, for it frequently catches a fin or penetrates the belly. Off hand, this must sound like a mighty tall fish story, and I certainly wouldn't expect anyone to believe it, - and I should doubt it myself if, in times past, I hadn't witnessed such a phenomenon. The greatest number caught in this manner measures about 12 to 18 inches. Wiley Anthony, using bait, caught a number yesterday averaging from 2 and a half to three feet in length.

In view of the plans outlined by Mr. Harness in an accompanying letter, I shall, in making acknowledgement, make no reference to fishing potentials at Melrose, for such information might well throw the Harness travel plans into a dither.

The letter from Friend Postell delights me because I know how enchanted he must be at the prospect of having the photostat machine he mentions. I have no doubt he will return to spend a few weeks on Cane River this summer, and perhaps he will be able to bring said machine with him. Also, he may be able to obtain likenesses of the rarer documents in the vault of the Natchitoches Court House, and if so, we may, through that medium, be able to gain more particulars about Marie Therese, still such a shadowy figure, although the examples of her creations are so visibly in evidence after all these years.

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Two bits of information, mildly odd, came to my attention this morning. In the post came an invitation for me to address the St. Denis Chapter of the D. A. R. in Natchitoches on February 13th. The envelope bore my name and the balance of the writing ran "Melrose Plantation, Natchitoches, Louisiana." What with the writer of the letter being a resident of Natchitoches some 60 odd years and a pilgrim to Melrose many a time, it does seem as though she might have been a bit more precise.

And the other of news came in a most round about fashion. I telephoned Mrs. Peyton Cunningham for an address, and slap off the bat she offered me congratulations on my impending portrait. I floundered around while trying to marshal my mind sufficiently to discover what she was referring to and a glimmer of light broke through when she added:

"I was chatting with Jimmy yesterday and he said Rosalyn was bubbling over with enthusiasm at the progress she is making".

Now off hand it would seem as though anyone ought to know if he is or is not sitting for a portrait, but it appears such a fact had not penetrated my thick skull. Automatically, after the congratulatory statement, I began figuring out how such a business to which I must have been a party could have transpired without my knowledge, and I came to this conclusion:

When Madam Aswell was here painting Chinese magnolias the other day, she amassed her floral models in my living room where I left her to her own devices for an hour or so while I busied myself with gardening in the African House area. Later I passed by Yucca and she called to me, saying she had finished the preliminary sketch, and I hauled out a coke for a five minute chat with her. As we exchanged five or ten minutes of small talk, she asked me if I minded if she sketched my likeness in a little notebook she had on her lap. Naturally I didn't have any objection and thought no more about it, not even thinking to ask how she had made out when in a couple of minutes she had put the notebook back in her purse. I conclude that from this pencil sketch she must have felt inclined on the following day to attempt a likeness on a larger scale, - but that is sheer conjecture on my part, in view of what Mrs. Cunningham had to refer to in quoting Herr Aswell.

When Rosalyn was here a week or so ago with Mrs. Wiley, if I remember correctly, albeit vaguely, there was talk about her regret in never having taken a likeness of the Madam in oil, and we speculated about portraits, the desirability of incorporating in such pictures some symbol indicative of the interests of the individual being painted, etc., but that is all I recall about such a topic. Today the lady telephoned me to say she had been among those present on Monday when I had harangued the multitude and how she had to restrain her impulse at the time to rush forward and ring my hand as an expression of whole hearted approval with what I had to say. I asked her how the magnolias looked after she had applied the finishing touches, and she said she wasn't satisfied, but must admit that they looked fair. Neither she nor I made any reference to anything suggestive of a portrait, and there

1804

4080

Wednesday, February 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I am completely be-fuddled by the present season.

Today has been one of gorgeous sunshine, following a night of star-spangled skies. The thermometer in Shreveport touched 32, and was probably a little less than that down here.

Some of the banana leaves look cooked while some don't. There was no ice in the mud puddles but there was half an inch in the bird baths.

At Arenbourg some of the pear trees haven't bloomed as yet, - obviously of the later variety, while other trees are in full leaf, while most of the crepe myrtles show now signs of expanding buds while others are in full leaf, as the earlier pears. And just to set the seal of confusion on my mind, a big old white lily which comes into flower in July, unfolded its white glory about 10 o'clock this morning.

Isn't that a twister to a season already topsy-turvy.

I am uncertain on another point, too, for I haven't determined as yet if Death stalked on my front gallery last night or if little Grandpa merely whisked away all three of her children to a quieter day nursery. I found her nest of yellow cotton on the brick pavement where it had fallen from the bench on which it had been reposing since that big old bird deposited the children there last Thursday or Friday. I noticed no evidence of any kind of a struggle and so I am hoping the altered situation was of the mother's own choosing and that the children are merely in hiding somewhere and not vanished from the face of the earth. I realize of course that all these speculations must make fascinating bits of news, and yet, since they are part and parcel of this household, I follow my natural impulse to mention them in passing.

I am glad to report that Dr. Raud's health appears to be improving steadily. I talked with him over the telephone this morning and he sounded ever so gay. He said he gets out for a ride every day and that before long he will be sliding up this way to call on me.

0204

4081

Coin-Coin
Referring to the enclosure, I am wondering if I would be trespassing on your goodness if I should decline to accompany the three individuals on the mission indicated to spend a day at the Court House in a three way go at trying to decipher some old documents, --I repeat, I am wondering if I should respond by saying that I could secure assistance in the matter, not by adding a fourth or fifth person to take over the Court Records, but on the contrary, I might be able to get some of the documents regarding Coin-Coin accounted for by sending a transcript of the original French to you. Tentatively I shall make such a response in acknowledgement of this letter, naming no names and guaranteeing no time limit. This would leave the matter in suspension if circumstances, either in business or on the domestic scene, assuming a flock of South American's might suddenly appear, so that you might easily decline a hand on a whole flock of perfectly legitimate grounds.

What is more, of course, this pursuit of knowledge regarding one Marie Therese, f.w.c., has nothing whatsoever to do about any impending articles on which we are working, and for the life of me, I can't understand why the Hollomans are going to so much trouble about drawing back the cloudy veils of the colonial period on her behalf. But since she was undoubtedly one of the greatest women Louisiana ever possess-ed as a citizen or resident, and since she undoubtedly is the builder of Yucca and the African House -- a truly remarkable woman measured from a vast assortment of angles, it seems to me wonderful indeed that this lawyer and his wife should feel impelled to make such a diligent search, especially in view of their definite lack of enthusiasm, even interest, in the race of which Madame Metoyer was such a distinguished member.

I charge off the interest of the husband of Mrs. Holloman so far as his determination to do the records, on the grounds of his purely legalistic mind, and a mighty dull one it is, and under what item his wife's interest is to be charged, I wouldn't have the vaguest notion, -- nor do I care, just so long as quite unwittingly, no doubt, on their part, they thus contribute to bringing to light a shadowy figure of greatness that has too long been shrouded in darkness.

Feeling you would be as interested as I in the pamphlet on the Black Swan, I shall send it along for your delectation, just as soon as it comes to hand. Being filed in our paraphernalia, it may eventually serve to some good purpose in the future when circumstances permit us to employ it in some study or other when you and I may be able to combine forces on such studies.

Never, that I can recall, has such an outrageously dull Memorandum been penned. I shall be so happy if I may do better on the morrow....

4082

Thursday, February 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It has been a good day at Arenbourg, in spite of one social hazard at Melrose that came near wrecking me.

The day was glorious as only a full day in Spring can be, and with sun up, I found myself busy at Arenbourg.

Back home for a 7 o'clock breakfast, half a dozen odd jobs including the mail, -- out-going, and thence to the store for in-coming.

When the clerk handed me my quota from the Post Office Department, a picture post card chanced to be on top of the letters. Celeste chanced to be along side, and in her usual friendly fashion, -- but a little extra social, it seemed to me, inquired:

"Oh, you got a picture post card. Who is it from...."

I told her I hadn't the vaguest notion and she asked if she might observe the scene thereon displayed. But she didn't stop at a glance at the front but turning it over, remarked that she would read it for me. And having read it, she looked puzzled and said:

"How odd.....this seems to come from the same place J. H. wrote one to me. Who is Irma T."

Now that was a good question, I thought, but like so many, it was none of her business, and would bring her no particular enchantment if she should find out. And so I lied and said:

"Why, you know Irma T.....Irma Tillinghast, that friend of Mr. Pipes in Natchez. Don't you remember I told you about her good luck in winning a Guggenheim Award to study Indian painting in the South West and in Mexico."

I might as well admit that I thought that was pretty good myself, -- just off the bat like that. Thank Heaven she didn't remember the months she made inquiries in late 1948 to learn the address of one Irma Tucker in order to send an acknowledgement for the flowers for the Madam's funeral, bearing her card.

But any way the whiskers are sliced, I don't like a close shave.

3804

4083

But once over that hurdle, I was able to get back to Arenbourg before the Knipmeyers arrived, and except for an hours interlude during the afternoon, contending with pilgrim problems, I spent the balance of the day making ready for Spring at Arenbourg.

I had an opportunity to some rather sturdy, albeit small crepe myrtles the other day, and I planted quite a few in Units No. 2 and Number 1 at Arenbourg. Assuming they are properly grouped, or were properly assorted when purchased, the eventual effect ought to be rather nice, I think, for I planted two at a time, uniting one watermelon red with one pure white one, by means of a stout chord with which I tied them in two or three places along the two foot stalks. I shall tighten up these chords several times during the summer, and they will probably develop into what appears to be a single bush carrying both the red and the white blossoms. With all the recent rains, the ground is pleasantly damp, and I believe these have a good chance to grow, although I must say it is a little late in the season for crepe myrtles to be planted, November or December being probably the best months.

With the aid of a willing helper, I spaded around all the pears and persimmons along the grive, which was quite a chore, and around some of the pecanes and quite a few of the larger crepe myrtles, while at the same time Peter was going full tilt on a tractor, re-ploughing the drive and the terrace. I also set in a couple of persimmons, - ones that had vanished from earlier plantings, and made a move in the direction of clipping the hedge, but I didn't get far in that direction, - what with the sun dipping low behind the Montose hills about then.

I am entranced to report that the two old gardenias rescued from destruction a week or so back appear to be satisfied with their new situation, - at least their leaves are green and new ones are putting out. And thus far the Opoulsas Pink camellias, although pretty tiny, are looking ever so pert.

I am physically tired tonight, but the kind of tiredness that gives satisfaction when by dint of stirring the ground with a stick, one feels that something or other has been accomplished, even though the undertaking has covered nothing more than kicking out the red carpet for old Primavera.

You will find a couple of things to provoke a smile in the letter from Madame "Zeeweeg". She is bound to be a charming woman, her letters are unintentionally such a panic.

And so to little old Yucca and a cup of Tender Leaf, a page of the Sherwood opus, and thence to my pillow.....

I'll bet Arenbourg will sleep good, too.....

4084

Friday, February 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another marvelous day, with much digging about at Arenbourg, with a vivid recollection in mind of a line in the New Orleans Item last summer, when a critic of Clemence's pictures remarked in print:

"It must be fun living on Cane River".

There were various things to claim much of my time at Melrose but I devoted a fair share to Arenbourg somehow or other and loved the clean fragrance of the newly turned earth.

But I didn't go at it "hammer and tongs" the way I did yesterday, and accordingly I may be able to stay awake long enough to run through a couple of pages of the Roosevelt-Hopkins opus tonight. I like the book. Obviously it is rather more of a reference volume for students of the inside operations of a great nation in times of peril, and off hand I should say that the biographical quality of the volume dims out when diplomatic papers spread over unusual lengths. But since I missed most of these when they were being brought out, - assuming some or most of them were, I am learning a lot and benefiting greatly in bringing my concept of situations and circumstances into better focus.

I was a little sleepy when I read one line and so am not sure to whom it was attributed, - probably Hopkins, - and I am not certain of the precise wording, but it was something F. D. R. must have relished if he ever heard it: -

.... "It's better to squander the tax payer's money than the tax payers."

Somebody should have tossed that line into politician Truman's address to the Democrats last night, a re-broadcast of which I heard sometime or other in the wee hours. His delivery was poor, for he muffed too many pertinent lines. But I guess it isn't much of an inspiration to write a speech, - or deliver one against the Republicans. I can't understand for the life of me how the Old Guard or Old Guard-ism still persists after all these years, as reflected in the Policy Statement, contrived by the big wigs of the G. O. P. a couple of weeks ago. Everything they set forth seems so negative and so completely lacking in new ideas, - or old ones dressed up in new finery. Somehow or other the Hoover approach to all problems

1804

4085

still seems to dominate Republican Party thinking, and I find a mental picture of "the great engineer" flashing through my mind every time I hear anyone quote from party Policy platform, and I am reminded of a line in the Sherwood book wherein somebody or other, in speaking of Mr. Hoover's blighting presence, comes forth with the opinion that if anyone should place a rose in the ex-President's hands, it undoubtedly would automatically begin wilting.

A note from Dora calls my attention to the Sunday night radio show of Horace Heidt, recommending the same to me, - primarily, I suppose, on the grounds that people of color sometimes have a place on the program, and one Jesse Owens, he says, is currently a runner-up for some special prize, I gather. Personally I up-set the entire house in rushing to choke the radio if the H. Heidt program steals up on me before I realize what is cooking, for I never did like contests much anyway, and there is never sufficient satisfaction for me in hearing one person win when I contemplate the natural depression that must be the lot of all the others who do not. In this instance, Dora can have all the program possible without the slightest draining of any of that particular ether wave on my part. As a matter of fact at that same hour on Sunday nights I sometimes listen to a perfectly outrageous Bible Slapper out of Gulf Port, Mississippi who is so hysterical he is positively fascinating in his ability to insult anybody's intelligence. If memory serves, this particular radio Divine is named Jessup, and he promises to heal the sick by prayer, especially if you will send along a donation with your account of your problems. And the killing part of it is that I know half a dozen colored people, -- particularly the slightly wayward mamas of particularly wayward children who are forever sending in donations to the Rev. Jessup with the hope that this quack will, through prayer, contrive to prevent the wayward children from getting too drunk on Saturday nights. Surely A. Lincoln remarked correctly that "You can fool some of the people all of the time....."

In spite of the heavy rains recently obtaining in this area, I think we shall have no trouble with water. The fields on each side of the Montrose Lane are under water but the level has dropped an inch or so in the last 24 hours, and what with clear weather ahead, the water will recede further from day to day, I expect. I guess the two million acres under water in Louisiana is centered on Jonesville, about 60 miles straight East of Melrose on the road to Natchez. But that section always goes under and so its present situation isn't surprising. I smiled to myself when I heard the River Commission announce that the Mississippi flood gates would not be opened between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Billions of dollars spent for said gates, and so far as I know, they never have been opened, not even in 1945 when everybody in Louisiana had damp feet.....

4086

Sunday, February 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Fortunately the Saturday mail was light for my entire secretariat, consisting of Messrs. Brew and Williams, a ong with half a dozen other negroes, found themselves in jail.

By some loop hole, Mr. Brew and three or four others contrived to get themselves released Saturday evening, but Murrel, Bookey, Smith Brosie, Charlie, etc., will not be turned out until Monday.

The thing is a mere manifestation of hilly billy police methods and may not otherwise be explained, and the boys will probably have a fairly good time, what with better food, probably, than they would get at home and perhaps a more comfortable place to sleep.

On Saturday noon the body of Horace Chapman, a negro about 40, was found in Cane River at Frenchie's honkey-tonk, hard by St. Mathews. It had been in the water a week. Heavy headed with wet groceries on Saturday night, he had engaged in a scuffle with Smith Brosie, and supposing he had cut him severely, apparantly ran away in the direction of the river and fell in. The boys who were standing about at the time were taken into custody this past Saturday, awaiting an autopsy. Accidental drowning was decided on as the cause of death, with some of the youths released, and the balance, apparantly, kept in jail over the week end on general principals or is it les. Except for Charlie Turner who is inclined to be rather boistrous, Murrel and Bookey and the rest chance to be the quiet and most well behaved on Melrose. And thus the "innocent by-standers" again take the rap.

On the home front, the merchant planter quite unexpectedly returned on Saturday night, several days ahead of schedule, which is usual. I dined with him today and we were flanked by Celeste, Madam Regard and Dan. I saw him for but a second alone, giving him the brief opportunity to chuckle over a story Celeste had told him about the intellectual or cultural pursuits of Miss I. Tillinghast of Natchez.

A more elaborate report will undoubtedly be for-coming shortly relative to life in the Southwest, Pan American relations and so on.

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4087

The weather continues fair but is a little cooler. I never can find any weather reports on Sunday, but assuming the atmosphere remains about as yesterday and today, tomorrow should prove excellent for gardening, - I hope.

I like Saturday nights because I usually am able to get a little extra reading fitted in to my schedule. Last night I traveled to the Casa Blanca Conference through the pages of the Sherwood book and thus succeeded in getting a much clearer concept of a heap of things that transpire at that time than I had previously been able to secure, and especially all the racket that went on among the petulant Free French doings at the time.

The more I read the Sherwood book, the more I appreciate the mass of direct quotations and summaries of documents pertaining to the time, and the more I find myself hoping somebody will do a book, possibly along the lines of that book about Washington during the Civil War, - Washington Reveille, or some such, in which the author will present a picture, centering on the White House, having to do in larger measure about or with the salient personalities during the Roosevelt regime. Mr. Sherwood with a single line, disposed of two personalities, - "The President was scheduled to entertain the Duke and Duchess of Windsor at noon."

If memory serves, Mrs. Nesbitt disposed of the same luncheon with not much more elaboration. It seems to me the Duke and Duchess are the most romantic figures in the contemporary social world with an unrivaled background of politics and romance that will forever make them unique figures in the topsy-turvy world of the 1930's and 1940's, and anyone doing a book about the White House in those years should stretch the account a little beyond a mere sentence.

While at Celeste's this noon, I saw something that suggests that perhaps Death did not stalk on my front gallery the other night, as I had supposed, or that if the Grim Reaper or is it Reapster did stalk there, Little Grandpa snatched the victims from him. For as I stood on Celeste's gallery, Little Grandpa very quietly scaled the trellis supporting the wisteria vine, and leaped over atop the pillar where her earlier boods had been cradled. My guess is that perhaps, following the assault by the dogs on my front gallery the other night, she transported her children to safety where no one but herself might have access, and so, perhaps, one of these days, the little family may again put in their appearance back at Yucca.

And so to another round with Mr. Sherwood, a cup of Tender Leaf and to bed.....

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4088

"Lord, make us truly thankful for this food we are about to receive, for nursin' up the body for Christ sake. Amen, --and take these other boys appetite away and give it all to me."

Monday, February 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I jotted down the above blessing, as dictated to me by the Dark Duke. He dropped in to see me for a moment this morning on his return with his wife and children from a wee end in Alexandria where he said both his sister and his brother-in-law had provided elegant repasts, one on Saturday night, the other on Sunday night, and the baked chicken and the big old Virginia ham looked so pretty when they sat down to supper, he just lifted up his voice and called on God for the blessing as phrased above. He gave me a sly glance, remarking that it was a pretty good one, he thought, but the boys at the table didn't seem to think much of it.

The full summer weather continues, bringing with it the billion things to do in the out of doors, including the accompanying hobbles imposed by the inevitable road runners.

Today's list wasn't so very long, but the arrivals were so spaced as to hinder my undertakings. Paynie's wife dropped in about 9, scuttling my hopes of saving coffee time, what with Celeste and Adam Regard having left early for Alexandria. Celeste came a little later, then Log and Clyde Anthony. Wood Brazeale, the lawyer, came for dinner with J. H. and one o'clock saw a flock of men to take a pass at gardening. J. H. had asked me before breakfast if I didn't want some men. I asked for 2 only, and was given 6..

Mrs. Combs dropped in about 2 o'clock on her way to Alexandria where she is taking a course in reference to her Welfare Work. She very kindly runs through her somewhat elaborate notes for me, so that I am thus able to get the high points in contemporary trends in that field. The Dark Duke had returned just as she arrived, and so I asked him to remain, --and on two counts, first because I thought he might glean a little from what was read from the notes, and secondly because I was curious to discover if he really would get anything, and if so, what. I was surprised and impressed at what he understood and remembered and wanted to elaborate upon after Mrs. Combs had departed. He has a good mind, rather quicker than Peter's, but never having had an opportunity to go to school, he is naturally handicapped by his limited vocabulary, if that, indeed, is the word to use when one fails to understand the meaning of words not in day to day parlance.

2804

4089

And between all this and the gardening section, the Aguerellas, - or however one spells the name, arrived. I hadn't seen them in ever so long - the artistic couple who labored so mightily on me in the dental department a year ago, although it seems like a million.

About 2 o'clock all my friends who spent the week end in jail arrived home. They passed this way to see me, but what with other things cooking, I asked them to try a contact with me on the morrow, and be prepared to tell all.

I read a little more of the Roosevelt Hopkins book and liked it, but have made up my mind somebody now ought to take all the material and write a biography of Hopkins. The other night I ran across a line in the Sherwood book, indicating Hopkins' tendency to use cuss words, even when speaking of poetry of which he was ever so fond. The occasion was a reference to some particularly pleasant bit of country side in England, and Hopkins remarked that is "one reason why the British write such God Damned good poetry".

I intended referring several days ago to how splendid I found a letter, quoted in the book, signed by G. Borglum, the sculptor of the stone faces in the Black Hills in the 1920's or 1930's. The letter is to Hopkins pleading for allotments of WPA funds for the Arts Project. The letter rakes, in my opinion, with that of, say, William Allen White, at his best, as in the Editorial on the death of his daughter. This Borglum letter has undoubtedly received wide publicity in print, but I had never heard of it before. Perhaps it is in that letter, rather than in something of Hopkins' writing, that the reference to the fate of the rose in Hoover's hands is mentioned.

And right then and there an idea strikes me: - why in the world haven't everybody or hasn't everybody who has any feeling at all for culture, joined hands in a series of broadcasts over all the major net works, preferably on sustaining time, of course, but if that avenue be closed, on paid programs which might ultimately be sponsored. Surely all the artists, art teachers, trustees of museums, museum staffs, etc., etc., not to mention devotees of the liberal, cultivated minds, who, up to now, seem to stop short with music. I shall certainly explore this matter with Mr. Lansford on his first go-round at "elrose". Obviously I shall return to this subject over and over again when I have had an opportunity to give the matter a little thought. And some day somebody will contrive a picture gallery for youngsters, paintings or illustrations on a grand scale of the aspects of life, both real and imaginative, such as pictures of their favorite mythological and folk lore heroes and heroines, etc., where a taste for this sort of thing might be inculcated early.

Well, Lord, there is so much to be taken under advisement, and here I am at the end of the page.....misere.....

1204 card from Grace and Carolyn Hill

4090

Fat Tuesday, February 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

To hand your elegant letter of the 10th et cetera, together with the grand assortment of clippings which I have devoured with avidity.

Poor you, what with all the hospitality you have had to dispense of late, the weather acting up, not to mention the Winds of varying intensity that have blown from at least a couple of directions. I never cease to marvel at the prodigious amount and variety of labor that you take with such stamina. Please, but please do give yourself a little respite if and whenever you can.

I am sure conversation must have been ever so brisk and informative during your recent sessions with leg of mutton and all. Surely there must be a billion side lights on as many subjects, stretching all the way from 1939 to 1949, and it must make interesting, if not too depressing listening. So little is known of situations in any particular place, and how much more in the dark we must have been when night settled down on Europe a decade ago.

And how kind and thoughtful of you to pass along some of these pictures of the contemporary scene. Isn't it a reminder of the Speak Easy era in America when today everyone in Europe living under the Verboten sign is now rushing into literary evening devoted to banned books of yester-year. I need scarcely assure you of my interest in such little side lights and I hope you will detail them endlessly, should any occur regarding any point as time marches on. Aside from the obvious stupidity of Iron Curtains, it has always seemed to me that one of the most deplorable results stemming from the sealing off of knowledge, - one people from another, - that after the Curtain has finally been pierced, it is unlikely that either set of human beings, after years of being thus separated from knowledge of the true doings of each other, can ever come to a full appreciation and appreciation, even a belief in and an understanding of the mental viewpoint of the other. If you have no ed anything along this line, - or, by some miracle, a manifestation that such gaps can actually sometimes be filled in and brought into comparatively true perspective, do pass the word along.

How characteristically generous of you to share your library with those to whom the books will mean so much. Another star gleams in your crown and again I bow in utter admiration.

4091

As for the clippings, I have enjoyed them enormously. Isn't the quotation from Churchill regarding splashing paint in Eternity so indicative of his originality of expression. And speaking of that gentleman, I understand, as I have never known before, - thanks to the Sherwood volume, that all through the war, Churchill was forever opposing the direct invasion of Europe from the West, having forever tired, and persistently, to carry out landings in the South instead, - Dalmatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rhodes, etc. As yet I have discovered no explanation of his viewpoint in this matter, and I am wondering if you recall having seen anything accounting for his opposition to the Channel attack. I understand from the present volume that an invasion on the Channel would have been attempted in 1942 had he not successfully contrived to get the African campaign adopted as a substitute, and his persistence continued through 1943, - and right up to within 6 or 8 months from the June, 1944 operation. Perhaps everybody knows why he maintained this aversion to the Channel invasion, but I do not, and, again, on the other hand, perhaps only Churchill knows, and, should that be the case, perhaps no one will ever learn.

And thanks much-much for the Times and the Herald Tribune clippings covering Shakespeare as it is not presented in Natchitoches. I haven't quite decided what I am going to do with these two items, but I think I shall stir up some kind of a business, using them as a basis for the doings. What with two weekly newspapers in town, and one of them rather inclined to be sympathetic to our friends, I may pen a line to the Editor, telephoning the other, and so, if possible, get the pot to simmering in circles where Entrenched Die Hards might, I hope, get scalded a little when the pot boils over.

The summer continues with an unending rain beginning late during the afternoon, continuing into the night. There is enough water in unwanted places in this section, but I think the ground is sufficiently dry to absorb a great deal more, and so far as our side of the fence is concerned, tonight's drizzle will do no harm.

A typical turn in the shuffling going on at the Court House was confided to me today. No reference should be made to this, since I don't want either secretary to know of it. The youth who became involved in the business, and so dragged in many others of his acquaintances, expressed himself to me, on assurance of confidence, - that he is completely at a loss as to why he ever said the drowned man, Horace Chapman, had attempted stabbing him on the night H. Chapman disappeared, for, as my informant explained, the man really hadn't so much as glanced in his direction at the honkey tonk, and he has been mooning about at the store all day, - "in a brown study", wondering why he ever came to link himself and his friends up with such a business. Well, so things turn, and how nice if this paper weren't so abruptly breaking off....

4092

4092

Washington's Birthday - Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, 1950.

Memorandum:

"We killed a hog today and my wife last night. She dreamed that Mr. Francois was on his place up the road, a ploughin' away without any mules in his flower garden, and so we thought we would like to ask if you would like to come and have supper with us tonight a little after first dark, what with the fine hog we ~~don't~~ done killed today and all."

Thus spake little Elam along about 4 o'clock this afternoon when I responded to a tap on my door.

Perhaps I should explain that the big day in any cabin in the Cane River country is hog killing day, and an invitation to dine at the home of anyone celebrating said ritual is rather special.

The Agarellas had passed by Yucca not half an hour before little Elam tapped, bringing along a bottle of wine of which they had not time to remain to sample with me, being in a "slow hurry". And so, on accepting the invitation to dine, I sent along the wine, and so everybody was licking his chops well in advance of first dark.

It was little Elam, when he was little, who presented me with the finest gift I ever received from a Cane River negro, - a little frog he brought me for my fountain in the Jardin des Confidences. And now that little Elam has grown and towers over me, he is still a person to my liking, although some of his recent doings, - channeling tractor gas into private auto-motive wagons of his own, etc., suggest he is temporarily off the straight and narrow path, and for that very reason I wanted to commune with him as his guest. His brother-in-law, Charlie Turner, who spent last week in jail and who had punneled my assistant secretary the week before, was also present, and Charlie's brother, Robert, together with the wives of each and two or three little children of each.

The food, although simple, was marvelous, the pork being seasoned in a fashion that only deep South negroes could contrive.

And the conversation, equally simple, was somehow as marvelously flavored with spiritual condiments whose identity would be as difficult to separate and label, but whose effects on the sensations were as deep and as satisfying.

I have just turned home by the light of the new moon, and my desk clock points to ten minutes after ten.

4093

The fine weather continues once more, following yesterday's rain, and the promise is for fair weather straight ahead, - I hope.

Bricks for the back gallery pavement began arriving this afternoon. I guess about a thousand were delivered, and a thousand more, at least, will be required.

With plantation work suspended because of the lingering dampness from last night, there were lots of people from the place dropping in to see me, and we all had fun assembling one thing or another by way of materials for tomorrow's labors on Yucca. I have been turning over in my mind for some time how some sort of water could be introduced into the White Garden or on to the gallery thereof, and today I guess I solved that matter. For ever so long I have eyed with yearning a big old sugar pot, perhaps 6 feet across, whose iron casting suggests the thing must date from colonial if not ante bellum times. It is beautifully shaped, the delicious curves tapering deftly from rim to base. My callers assisted me in moving the thing to within reach of a faucet, and scrubbing produced striking effects. Tomorrow we shall apply a steel brush to the rust, and within a week it will look alright. A base will be required for it to rest on, of course, and I worked out the design for a pedestal of brick, similar to those used on the gallery pavement. But then my memory began serving me better and I recalled an ancient mill stone that had once figured in the old mill that was incorporated in the original great barn, the furthest unit to the East, - Yucca, the African House, the Barn. And so I shall roll this mellow item of colonial days, placing it on the gallery as a focal point in the whole scheme, - slap under the punka, with the great sugar pot atop the grindstone, and the pot itself brimming over with water, flecked with a few dozen goldfish, and the surface gaily decked out with the purple or lavender flags of the water hyacinthes.

It sounds to me as though, if the thing ever gets rigged up, it really ought to be rather nice.

Well, so much for local doings, and I shall break off at this point, for I want to hear a broadcast about a Red River levee breaking on the East side of the river between Montgomery and Alexandria, which was reported a little earlier in the evening when conversation over the dusky supper table was going full tilt and I merely noted the news cast while remarking upon it to no one, what with conversation being so rich and fulsome of folk lore at the time.

One more note regarding the dinner. The local custom was maintained as a matter of course, - the gentlemen being given a table in one room where they dined by themselves, while the ladies and children dined in another by themselves, and it was all the merrier it seems when we joined each other, - a kind of reversal of formal dinners where the ladies withdraw following

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Thursday, February 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Hurly-burly is the word.....

Back from Arenbourg by 7:20 to find three men waiting for me to do some gardening. 7:21, and 8 men arrived to jack up the house.

This was enough to keep the wheels turning rather briskly, but in the morning there were a couple of telephone calls thrown in, not to mention the usual Thursday Knipmayers.

Afternoon and more men for the jacking up business and the sisters Dormon blew in bearing me a pot of elegant hyacinthes, - rose ones.

The jack up job was a botch, for J. H. loves to get anything done with a lick and a promise, and he calls the job done whereas it really isn't well started. But I guess it will hold the house for another stretch, and then we shall, I hope, have the excitement of doing it all over again. Originally he had sent the men, not to jack up the house but to lay the brick pavement on the gallery, precisely where vast excavations have to be indulged in to get the jacks under the house. I shall enjoy the odd sensation of level floors tonight, and tomorrow when they develope 30 degree angles from North to South, I shall feel right back home again.

Well, let's get on to the Dormons. Really, they looked quite spiffy, "Ole Virginie", a study in gray, and Caroline, likewise in a tailored suit, but hers in dark green wit light --interruption....

I guess I was speaking of little Miss Dormon and her chic green suit and hat of like color and material. She was bubbling as usual, but this time over the new log residence the Dormons are building this summer. They sold some timber from Briarwood and had the loggers cut enough round trunks of trees for their house. Log cabins of squared wood are air-ish enough, of round logs even more so. But the Dormons are impervious to comfort in their own dwelling although they always revel in the amenities of households maintained by other people, and since they spend much of their lives at home, I guess they don't mind chink holes through which wintry blast can penetrate in December and bugs on end in summer. But if the Dormons get a tenth of the satisfaction living the place that

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they derive in the anticipation of doing so, then
their log cabin will most certainly not have been in
vain.

Thanks to a short mail, I had an opportunity to get
caught up on some more clippings, all from you, and they
delighted me. I am so glad to know that the new edition of
Diary From Dixie includes material which the earlier edition
omitted. It is pleasant to know that Mrs. Chesnut's book
served Ben Ames Williams in writing his House Divided while
he in turn could return the gesture by supervising the
editing of this new edition of the Dixie opus. I don't
recall ever having heard House Divided mentioned in Talking
Book Topics. If I had to read a novel, I suppose I would enjoy
it as much as any I can think of at the moment.

Having stepped out to supper last night, I didn't get
an opportunity to have a final go at the Sherwood book. At
my last sitting I was reading about that strange doings when
the President, Colonels Knox and Stimson, pretty much of all
the General Staff and top officers of the war were on the
battleship Iowa, in mid Atlantic when one day, while they were
all on deck, a torpedo came charging slap at the Iowa from
one of the protesting destroyers convoying the Iowa. No one
on the destroyer knew who was aboard the Iowa, but, as
Mr. Sherwood observes, had the destroyers chief officer known,
he probably would have hung the ship's anchor around his neck
and jumped overboard.

Did I mention that Celeste went to a specialist in Shreveport
yesterday about a sore eye and was told it was a nerve thing and
that she was undoubtedly flying about too endlessly. Back home
at 6, there was so e kind of a doings at her house and tonight she
has gone to some kind of a party in town, but the eye department
is all well and so we live, it appears, in the best of all kinds of
worlds.

At Arenbourg this morning, I discovered two or three dozen
great lilies in an expectant state, their blossoms seeming to
have matured to the point of unfolding today. Accordingly I
brought home a full armful, thus adding a heady perfume to
the Yucca living room while the banging of hammers and creaking
of jacks added contradictory elements to the atmosphere, as
the outside opposed the inside with racket versus harmony.

I am pleased to report that the Arenbourg sweet olive is
heavily laden with blossoms again, and is apparently putting on
new growth. What kind of a year this is going to be for vegetation
I can not imagine, but they say the bug crop is going to be
wonderful, what with spring lasting all winter.....

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Friday, February 24th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Today came your grand air mail and I hasten to say how
noble of you to offer to lend a helping hand in the translations
about Mme. Co in-Coin.

But under no circumstances, should any come to hand, let
them push you about, for nobody has to catch a train, and if
and when you find the leisure and the impulse to have a go
at them, and you aren't wearing yourself to a frazzle thereby,
then and only then will you give them so much as a glance, I
hope.

There is a letter that arrived today containing two or
three hand written pages, which I assume to be the material in
question. But I was so pressed for time all during the day
that I never did get an opportunity to do more than read one
letter, and naturally the one selected did not bear an
Alexandria cancellation.

I am so glad there is a glimmer of sunshine holding a
promise of no more visitors to your busy household within the
immediate future, and I am hoping this promise hold true and
that you may have a whole flock of week ends in which you may
rumage around in a billion things that I am sure are
awaiting your first moment of relaxation.

My radio speaks of rain and chill in your region. But
be of good cheer, for what with Spring bombarding us daily from all
quarters, Manhattan is bound to give way to Melrose temperatures
eventually.

I somehow carved off a couple of hours for gardening by
myself at Arenbourg, the dawn was so marvelous, and back at
Melrose I had two or three gardeners scuffling about
while 6 or 8 men were working at Yucca, hauling sand into which
the brick were to be set, etc., etc. Twice during the day
they had the pavement about a quarter laid, and twice I made
them take it up. After a while I got tired and just let them
go ahead. The surface when completed, will be about as undulating
as the Atlantic in January off the Grand Banks, and the designs
they seem to be contriving are so unbelievably bad that the whole
thing becomes fascinating, and probably after it has been used
a week or two, nobody will ever notice the design, and a few
generations hence, when archiologists are excavating for
remnants of old mulatto Arts, they will uncover this
rare example, entirely contrived by negroes, indifferent with
Spring and worn out by too much frolicking for nights on end.

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Six or eight of the boys, not today's laborers on the Yucca project, but engaged in other plantation activities passed this way. - Puny, Peter, Log, etc. and Log regaled us with an adventure he had experienced this morning when to the West of the cement in the Montrose Hills, he and Bookey and Mr. Brew were searching for some tract of land J. H. owns over there, for they had been sent with a big old truck to bring back sand. Nothing but hill billies live beyond the cement and as they are invariably mean if not vicious to the colored people, the boys were hesitant about inquiring as to the location of the Henry property. But finally, Log decided he would stop the truck and go to the next house they came to. As he gathered up all his courage and headed out, the other boys opened up a sack of cracklin's, by way of a bit of breakfast while waiting, and Log admonished them to save him some.

But Long never got to the house, for no sooner had he approached it than three white bull dogs rushed out at him. Fortunately he regained the cab of the truck before the dogs caught up with him but somehow in the excitement, one of the other boys dropped the paper sack containing the fried pork. There the three boys were inside the cab, their food on the ground just 3 feet perhaps immediately beneath the door of the truck, and yet they couldn't reach for it, the dogs were so vicious. They contemplated the fate of their breakfast for a moment or two, trying to think how they might retrieve it without getting an arm or a leg snapped off, when one of the big old bull dogs came sniffing around the cab door, and then, discovering the sack of cracklin's, sniffed even more madly at it, glancing the while, first at the sack then at the boys in the cab. Naturally they expected to see the food devoured with no quick snap of the mighty jaws, but they were mistaken. Instead the dog disdained the colored man's food, and neatly raising a hind leg, sprinkled the spilled sack, and thereupon trotted off. Hill billies are mean to begin with, but I must say their animals, while just as mean, are, --it must be admitted,-- even meaner and more subtle.

I somehow worked in about 50 college students from Shreveport, I guess they were, but didn't do more than give them a little chat about early Melrose, it provides such an excellent medium for poking fun at Shakespeare as not presented in one Louisiana college, and after that let them have a look at the outside of the buildings. Dr. Erwin dropped by to chat with J. H. and me while we were observing the strange patterns developing on the Yucca pavement. He had much to say about the present promise for boll weevil this year, which seems to be wonderful, what with no cold this year to kill any of them, - and so the day played out, and tonight I shall sleep without too much Tender Leaf or Merwood to set my head nodding.....

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Sunday, February 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another lovely day but cooler.....

As you have undoubtedly noticed, I found an opportunity to glance at the penciled stuff from Mrs. Holloman before the departure of Saturday's post, and so I sent the whole business along. Please don't, please, put yourself through in making the translation, for we can send it along to her whenever convenient. I have no doubt you will make a copy of these documents for our file, when turning the originals into English. If you should care to do so, you might keep the duplicate in one of your own scrapbooks, files or whatever, and I shall send along her copy to her.

Under separate cover, I am sending along the photostats of three other papers which you may, I hope, be able to decipher without too much difficulty. Eventually the originals should be returned with a copy of the English rendition, but, please, please don't feel rushed about these for we are not going to use them in any article, and why she and her husband have generated so much interest about them, I cannot imagine, except that he and she seem to be the type that might get interested in anything, and loose the zest with just as much speed.

They came up and spent this afternoon with me, and after a sitting of four or five hours, - one expounding legal terms endlessly, the other chattering away at a great rate about everything from Marie Therese Coin-Coin through the Black Swan, General Devereux, old Audubon, et cetera, - the antiphonal clattering along to left and right of me until they might have mounted their horseless carriage and disappeared into the shadow of first dark.

I did enjoy running through the Melrose Abstract with Mr. Holloman. For a few salient points, thinking you might find some clarification of them pertinent at this time, I shall do a Herr Holloman, and rattle off a few: - no record exists that we know of during the occupancy of this property by the parents of Augustin, Louis, Suzanne, etc, but obviously they did life here as the presence of the African House and Yucca attest. In the 1790's, Louis seems to have been given a patent, obviously, I should say, to property in the family. Louis died in 1832, and his son, Louis, built Melrose. He died in 1837, leaving a minor, Theophile Metoyer. In 1847 the property passed to

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the brothers Hippolite and Henry Hertzog. Much litigation ensued following the Civil War and they lost it in 1869 to some people whose names I have forgotten, - merchants in New Orleans, I believe, who never occupied the place but had it operated, I suppose, as absentee landlords. Old Joseph Henry acquired the place in 1884, and on his death in 1898 or 1899, it was acquired by John Henry, husband of Cammie Garret Henry.

But enough of this business, and the mere reading of what I write must be as tedious as I am tired of having heard the particulars reeled off with such monotony all after noon.

On Saturday morning the brick gallery of Yucca was finally fitted together, and it really doesn't look half so bad as it should. Tomorrow concrete edges will be contrived on the garden side to hold the bricks in place, and the steps to the two doors from the house and the two perfecting rooms, - the Chapel, etc., will be contrived, and then, I hope, the workmen will depart, following a generous sanding of the bricks to fill in the little crevices. The thing was such a hurly-burly on Saturday, - getting the bricks to fit together as the final stages were reached, that I marched myself to Arenbourg to garden, since I concluded nobody could ever get the workers out of their seemingly hopeless scuffle. Fortunately they somehow extricated themselves.

After they had gone I got hold of Puny, Eugabou and Ezra who rolled the heavy old mill stone into the center of the gallery. By some miracle not a brick was broken in the doing. Then they placed the big old iron sugar cauldron atop the mill stone, and that bit of garden-decor, under roof, was accomplished. Later the Dark Duke passed by and wanted to see how the big old pot would look with water in it, and so he went to work filling it. Then, just as a gesture, I floated some water hyacinthes on the surface and slide a few gold fish into the shadowy depths of the dark cauldron, - collapsing with Log on an old bench to admire our handiwork and revive out spirits with a glass of wine. I really think the place is going to look rather nice when all the piles of sand, cement, wheelbarrows, shovels, brooms, etc., are cleared away, and I can make use of the place to work on scrapbooks or whatever.

From the two attached slips, you will gather from the one that J. H. must have deposited the Sutton check, covering Bachelor hush money in my favor. He handed me the slip and the check book, which balanced very nicely against reparations I had insisted upon, as against the amount indicated, which I assume to be a couple of hundred dollars. I have signed a blank check, which I suggest you make out to the extent of putting your name on same. I shall never draw on the account and I ask that you always feel that it is yours and in case of my death, I trust you will not fail to draw on it instantly. In the mean time it will be nice to consider it perhaps as a little insurance item or whatever you please.....

4014

DA R speech
matchbooks 4100

Monday, February 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

As you may have already noticed, the enclosed clipping isn't much, but I send it along for the record regardless.

Today has been full-full and I still have so many odds and ends to attend to before folding up my beard that this Memo may be a little diller, - but happily briefer than usual.

By dint of main force and awkwardness, with much pushing and hauling and a little whip cracking, the brick pavement giving on the white garden is completed, and is tonight under a bedspread of sand an inch or two thick. The sand is spread over the entire surface so that it may trickle down between the individual bricks which are not set in cement but rather are fitted together in such a way as to eliminate all the suggestion of modern creation, and the sad seeping down, will hold them more or less firmly in place. I had an apron of cement spread along the edge of the gallery on the garden side, perhaps 6 inches in width, which will act as a bulwark against spreading on that side, and an ample line of Giants Beard, edging the same, will completely conceal the cement.

Asdie from the half dozen men contriving the brick steps from the gallery to the two doors, - two bricks high, but therefore requiring up a single riser, I had half a dozen men in the gardens, and they required constance supervision, for what I was contriving there could be comprehended by no one by me, and there was some vagueness in my own head, although I was concerned more by the means that the final end I had envisioned about re-grouping day lilies, re-arranging borders, etc.

I had devoted a couple of hours before sun up or shortly thereafter to Arenbourg, where I had Puny heling me with rigging up some thing in anticipation of doing some grafting either late this week or early next. It is good to know that ground is "ploughed".

Sprinkled through these activities were the inevitable pilgrims. Some physician from town whom I do not know, - a Dr. Moody, I believe, passed himself off as a great friend of some of the Henrys, - but at supper I learned this was quite the opposite from the truth. Dr. Moody had the nerve, --on this, his first visit, --to bring a Dallas physician with him, the latter

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being pleasantly high. I resented not the pleasant state of his frame of mind, but the effrontery of anyone bringing such a guest, what with all the honkey-tonks between here and town where they could have found a heap more stuff for which the one physician was obviously inclined to have as first thought in his mind.

After leaving, they returned from their car, bringing me a bottle of whiskey which I declined. I gladly would have taken it to pass along to some of my colored friends, but it was more important, I felt, to snub them with the bottle than to give much consideration to Saturday night extras in the local frolic department.

Things were beginning to jell on the back gallery, and I had hoped to devote the rest of the evening to things there when Dan Henry brought a couple dull friends of his for a bar, making a scramble of the finishing touches in the gallery business.

A couple of other doctors arrived about the same time, one a rather famous surgeon, and that threw things further into a tangle. Net result: - supper was two hours behind schedule, and I am two hours behind in everything, including sleep.

I laugh when I think of Mrs. Hunter Pierson's remark to me three or four Sundays ago:

"What in the world can you possibly do all day in a place so remote as this."

I felt like saying I can consume a heap of energy restraining myself from batting people with foolish questions just like you are propounding.

On early Sunday morning Joe Doo's honkey tonk was broken in to and a case of whiskey lifted. Joe Doo is the son-in-law of the former Mrs. Clarence Compton, and operates the honkey tonk which appears, I think, in one of the snapshots of Cane River, taken from the terrace at Arenbourg, - the place just at the far end of the Melrose bridge, - on the West bank.

The culprit who did the stealing was Love Williams, uncle of my second secretary, who broken into the old Melrose store a year or two ago, stealing some hoes or hoe handles, I have forgotten which, - the same to exchange with some merchant planter or other for fire water. The Sheriff took love to town on Sunday, and arrested Clyde Claude Emmett Davis for worrying his former wife, Jackie, the complaint being filed by one Clemence Hunter, mother of Jackie. J. A. hauled both of the gentlemen back to Melrose this morning. And so things turn, and so I turn to a couple of other things, including my downy couch....

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Tuesday, February 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another busy day, and another day of full blown Spring, with all the breezes from the direction of the Gulf and withal as balmy as such seasonal items are supposed to be.

Early this morning I worked with Puny, cutting twigs from various persimmons, including the splendid ante bellum one I talked so exhaustively about along in November, and some from giant oriental varieties. These twigs were then carefully wrapped and placed in the ice box where they will remain until early next week when we shall devote ourselves to contriving unusual combinations on the Arenbourg collection. What with the season so entirely out of joint, it is difficult to judge what may result from this year's grafting, which will probably be in the extreme, successful or a dismal failure. But it will be fun in trying, and if success favors the enterprise, then it ought to be twice as good as such horticultural exploits turn out.

At Yucca I put the finishing touches on the White Garden gallery. A couple of men helped me shovel up the sand from the pavement, and after the same had been properly swept and re-swept, we laid down some old rugs, carted out the furniture, consisting of benches, chairs of the home made variety, with cane seats in some cases and cow hide in others. With the iron cauldron standing slap beneath the punka this year, there is every suggestion, I imagine, that it may have been placed there in order that the soup, - or whatever may be cooking, - may be cooled the more readily.

A young mountain of sand that had been dumped in front of the gallery had to be moved, 6 or 8 huge truck loads, I guess, and that was a job, but the men worked with vigor. I find that occasional intervals for a cigarette or a glass of wine or some such really turns out the work, and today we turned it.

This afternoon, among other things, I edged the gallery and the beds of butterfly lilies which emphasize the projecting chapel and its counterpart to the west, and the whole business looked rather spiffy and awfully Le Notre when we were done.

In between times there were pilgrims, and one or two were very nice. Along about dinner time, J. H. introduced me to a former New Orleans banker who was passing this way. I asked him to remain for soup with the clerk and me and he did. He

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seemed to know everybody in New Orleans and had many an amusing tale to tell of Lyle and particularly his enthusiasm for Mardi Gras. He gave an excellent description of this year's Comus Ball, - which, as you know is as reserved for the elect as is St. Celas's in Charleston. I believe the man's name, pronounced like Borden is probably spelled Bordaun or Bordaun or some such, apparently has as keen an eye for social details as for banking and he had many an admiring word for the Duchess of Windsor. On the day following the ball, some one had mentioned having seen him chatting with her and remarked how ravishing she was. He said they mentioned her age as 55, which was the first time he had thought of numbers since he had seen her the night before, for he found her one of those people whose ages are of no interest or consequence to the person in her company. And I guess that is one of the nice things the gallant New Orleans gentleman could have said.

If this letter seems a little more disjointed than usual, just charge it off to the racket going on outside, for about 8 o'clock a vast terrestrial cannonade began and for the last half hour or so the crashing and flashing have been impressive to the extent of knocking the electricity out completely from time to time. Fortunately it has returned again after intervals of varying length, but the change from light to dark, interposed by tremendous flashes during the interim have contributed nothing to keeping my mind on our conversation.

The ground, - where it isn't under water, is getting rather dry, and I am glad to this little shower, which will probably add little if anything to the sections where floods are currently obtaining, for those water, I suppose, come from above here, and what we are getting tonight will only dampen things further to the South.

I have but ten minutes reading to finish the Sherwood book. I thought I would get to it last night, but sleep caught up with me before I got the disk to whirling. Tonight I hope to explore this final part. I am glad I read the book for it has afforded me much information I lacked and enhanced by admiration for Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Roosevelt, assuming the stock of the latter had any further place to go upward in my admiration.

In the last chapter thus far read, I was interested to learn that while Mr. Hopkins didn't think so much of some of the things turned out by the Federal Writer's Project, he was really proud of the State Guides and, after quitting Washington and taking a house on 5th Avenue in Manhattan, he had a set of the latter in his library.

The storm seems to have withdrawn with only a faint flash and a remote rumble now and then to recall it to mind, but the gentle rain continues to "dropeth from heaven", and I like it....

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4104

Wednesday, March 1st, 1950.

Memorandum:

In spite of all the heavenly banging that went on last night, only about an inch of water fell, and while it was sufficient to perk up the plants, it added nothing to the flood situation in these parts, I think.

Today was cooler and tonight the moon is magnificent. I feel bound to make a little turn to Arenbourg after this little chat with you.

Because of the dampness this morning, J. H. decided 15 or 20 field hands could be better employed at the building trade than in ploughing and accordingly he waved a wand and set them all to mixing concrete and pouring the same for a new foundation and floor of a garage he is building along side the store. I know of nothing he likes so much as getting a couple of dozen negroes all tangled up at some job or other that through the nature of the business inclined to get them but completely tangled up in whatever is on the docket. He requires at least three or four to set out a harmless little old camelia, perhaps a foot in height, and when the operations require something more masterful in outlay, he is really in his element. I saw 10 men this morning, all armed with hoes, and each one falling over the next man, at mixing cement and sand in a little old box about five feet long and three wide. Gravel was flying at a great rate and carpenters were hammering away at forms for the stuff to be poured into, J. H. the while standing along side, throwing out suggestions about something of which he knows and cares nothing, and the negroes all giggling and jumping and loving it.

Months can go by without the gardens being able to raise a single harmless gardener, but then comes the day when something really ought to be done and ten times as many people are set to ~~chop~~ chopping weeks and rare plants with equal abandon, and he and the gardeners, so called, are all in the 7th heaven.

It will be a wonder if the three car garage, made of cement blocks isn't finished before a couple of days have passed. I think he has delayed building the thing for at least ten years.

Most of the stuff thus turned out is a slipshod business, of course, but everybody concerned with the doings is having fun, and that seems to be the main thing.

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4105

At long last I finished the Sherwood book last night. I liked it.

And tonight, after returning from Arenbourg, I shall sample a page or two of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. As I understand it, this is an edition in modern English, and perhaps I shall get something out of it. I have tried the thing in the 14th century original English and never got very far with it, so busy was I trying to find out what the words meant that I never did get much meaning out of any of the completed sentences. One Alexander Scourby is listed as the reader, and so I may still get less out of the meaning of the words than I do out of that rare artist's rendition. But that is always a great satisfaction in reading verse of this type, for in such a set up I can just read, re-read and re-read the same page, getting sufficient out of the performance to make the sense of the written material quite secondary in importance. The Scourby rendition of anything comes closer to making the spoken word as unimportant as the words warbled by an opera star, and I guess Mr. Scourby could read the Bonx Telephone Book for Talking Books and the thing would automatically satisfy the reader.

A nice letter to hand from Herr Postell which I inadvertently carried out with some trash to be burned. He philosophized much on the Why of Mardi Gras which strikes me he might better start in at a basic unit easier handled, to wit, - the Why of Saturday night. He is also doing some big mathematical calculations with some kind of a statistical slide rule, and his findings turned over to an expert in the higher brackets of calculus, the whole to determine something or other based on his recently acquire knowledge that in ante bellum times the plantation working 30 slaves or less, without an overseer lost 6 and a half days yearly per slave from normal labor, whereas plantations equipped with more than 30 slaves and employing an overseer averaged a yearly work day loss of 15 days per slave. It seems that he now has this compilation all in hand, and now, it seems to me, if he can only get the Why of Mardi Gras on the same instrument, he may discover something or other, but at the moment, I can't think what.

But in spite of this rallery, probably spelled more simply, -- I really admire the work the man is doing and the heritage of ante bellum medical lore in particular is going to be the richer because of the splendid work he is rescuing from oblivion.

I had an unexpected request tonight from one of my coal black friends who dropped by for a moment on his way to the movie at the honkey tonk. He said he had heard I "am rigging up a chapel", and as he is "a-fixin' to get married" by ploughin time, he wondered if I was going to let "colored niggers like me" in to the place for such a business. That certainly sounds like the advent of a gay Spring.....just so long as the guests don't fall into the sugar pot....

4106

Thursday, March 2nd, 1950;

Memorandum:

After an entire season of winter on the calendar and summer on the thermometer, the latter at long last seems to have come into conjunction with the former, and actual winter seems to have really arrived.

It sleeted this afternoon, - not much, but enough to suggest that the Arenbourg children might merit some warm "undies" tonight. And tonight, - I write at 9:30, - there is something or other dropping from on high, too solid for rain, too globe like in appearance to remind one of snow. I reckon they are ice pellets and along about midnight, I suppose, next summer's promise of a banana crop will be gone glimmering.

But in spite of such doings of the weather, I found myself fairly busy today, and the Chapel came a step nearer reality. I was supposed to have carpenters this morning but drew only gardeners. This afternoon I received what I had expected in the morning. The net result for the afternoon's labor was four crude benches of rough lumber which I like ever so much for the somewhat plain interior of the Chapel with its mud walls and cypress supports, at once holding up the building and the mud walls in place. I don't know how many pews it take to make an aisle, but I reckon this four, contrived today, ought to turn the trick.

Tomorrow or some day next week I shall contrive a cross about 8 or 10 feet in height and do something about a stained glass window. Then a few coats of white paint on some of the stationary blinds and some kind of an alter contrived, and the thing will begin taking shape. When the pair giving on the gallery are opened, even though ajar but 6 or 8 inches, the colored glass will be within view, and the whole effect when viewed from beyond the ancient sugar cauldron, will be alright, I think.

Except to go to the Post Office this morning, I never did get out that way today, but I understand garage building is still going along merrily. J. H. went somewhere this afternoon, so I reckon the cement mixers probably slowed down to something like a mile a minute or so after their chief source of inspiration left the field to their own devices.

3014

4107

Came the Knipmeyers this morning and while the sitting was pleasant, it added nothing to the sum total of my knowledge of Parish doings and inwardly I was a little restive,, begrudging the hourthus spent, what with all the doings going on outside. After supper, Dee-Dee and the Dark Duke passed this way, and they had much to reveal about the settlement of the late Richard Sapp, who was Dee-Dee's father in law. They say there is to be some kind of an auction on Saturday, March 18th, at which time certain farm gear and a few household items will be disposed of under the supervision of "Lawyer Williams". If R. B. is going to handle that business, perhaps I had better attend, just in case there might be some odd item of negro contrivance, suitable eventually for Arenbourg, that may come up for sale. Don't you think so.

In speaking of one of the Sapp ladies calling at his house one day and while there attempting to alter the established customs of the household, Log spoke of his suppressed annoyance with the visitor. He said:

"I sure used to think I was black alright, but after that bag had dipped into how my house should be run, I found out that my color wasn't really black, but just the first primer coat, 'cause befora she got gone I was really what you'd call black, and none of this pale stuff like I looks now, and it looked like my belly was a-swellin' just like one of them there big old frogs a-puffin' up in the Spring time and ready to bust....."

and I suppose that is where the Dark Duke is unusual in that he not only has a sense of humor but the rarest of qualities in that department, - his ability to see how hilarious he himself may appear on occasion.

After my return to Yucca from a little tour to Arenbourg in the moonlight last night, I undertook a couple of pages from the Canterbury Tales, and found both the contemporary rendition of the ancient English and the polished presentation by A. Scourby equally laudable. I was so pleasantly drowsy that I would keep nodding in the middle of the page, but I don't mind doing that, for not only does it indicate I am able to relax readily for sleep I probably am ready to undertake, but it also affords me an excellent excuse for re-reading the page. And so I read the two pages a couple of times each, feeling the richer for going over the same ground a second or third time. The only improvement in the present edition is the absence of a biographical note on the author. It seems to me I do recall that Chaucer was a customs official in the London of Richar the 2nd, and that he figured at Court where he enjoyed considerable popularity, but I still should like to remember more and I must say I am sorry the Library of Congress had never accepted my recommendation that Talking Book records carry a brief sketch of the author's life. The rain continues and so I guess we may escape a frost or freeze, and so much the better for our side....

COLL

4108

Friday, March 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

A drizzle kept going last night, so the cold never became intense enough to do any harm to the tender new leaves.

It has rained all day and continues sprinkling tonight, with a promise of more for tomorrow.

I have been soaked three times today, but each soaking was followed by a hot bath, and so I feel as secure as the tender new green leaves.

Celeste wanted to take some plants with her to South Louisiana when driving yonder this afternoon, to park Madam Regard there while J. H. and Celeste are in Chicago.

At supper J. H. was remarking how odd it is that the local power people are finding it impossible to find people to make the Chicago jaunt for the R. E. A. meeting. He said he realized I would decline but that he might as well invite me to go if I should care to. Frankly, I wouldn't. I believe a special train leaves from this area and all expenses of travel, hotels and a couple of hundred dollars are allowed each traveler, the number being determined by some magical formula in advance. Up to this day before departure, the quota allowed has not been filled. I reckon the Chicago Chamber of Commerce wouldn't feel too flattered to learn that people can't even be paid to visit their fair city.

A few days ago I promised Celeste I would dig her some plants to take to South Louisiana. I never like to round such things up in advance, what with the drying up of the roots if thus exposed to the air. Well, nothing had much chance to dry out today, for with torrents falling from on high, my big problem was keeping things from being drowned, including myself.

But after I had disposed of that job and rigged myself up into some fresh clothes, I noticed a little ditching was in order to let off water piling up along the new brick pavement, and ditch I did, and soaked again I got.

8014

4109

Later I decided the day was perfect for determining precisely where some of the low spots might be at Arenbourg, and so I undertook that little survey, and thus the patchwork of dry and wet played out their pattern, and finally, on returning to Yucca, pretty spattered up with mud, I poured myself into the bath tub for the third time. Lo! now water came out of the faucet, which is always a rare sensation. With all the liquid falling from the skies, it would seem as though complaints about nothing to dip one's self into might be a little over doing the point.

Somewhere in all the day's doings, I got a thorn in my finger, and got it out again. It makes fiddling with this keyboard a little touchy, but it is merely a momentary annoyance.

In spite of the inclement weather, I had quite a few callers and a couple of telephone messages came through, asking for tours, which, naturally, I declined. Why anybody should want to head out into such weather and such mud puddles, I cannot imagine. On the 13th I have promised to receive 40 from the college, but I am not going to bother with too many other people.

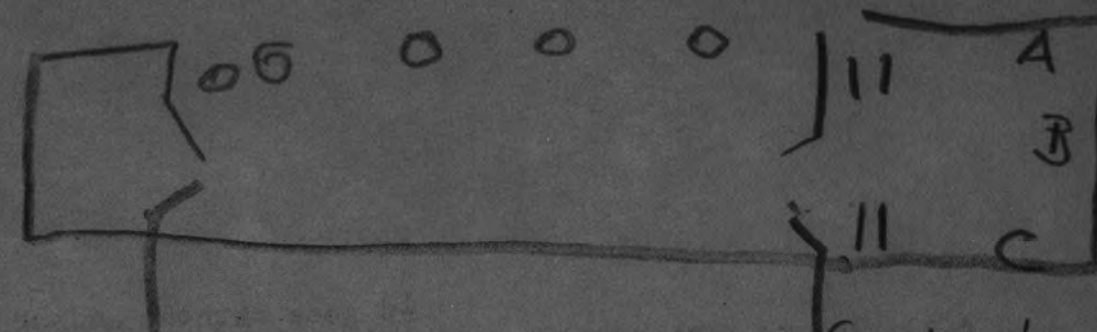
I suppose Mrs. Holloman ought to have some more news regarding the Black Swan before long. In the notices thus far unearthed, there is no reference to little Miss Eliza Greenfield being an accomplished pianist, and yet the extended account of her appearance in Richmond, Virginia, in the newspaper of that city in the 1840's dwelt at considerable length upon her accomplishments in that field. One quotation from an Albany, New York, newspaper records that Governor Hunt and the entire Legislature attended the Black Swan's concert in that city in the 1850's. As for her remarkable artistry displayed at that concert, however, only matters relating to her voice, its unusual quality, its range beyond that of Jenny Lind, etc., were touched upon and nothing about her playing. I am under the impression she may have played her own accompaniment on occasion, although I can't seem to remember where I stirred up such an impression and it may be more imaginative than real.

But enough of such speculation, and I must knock off a couple of letters, skim through a page or two of those Canterbury doings, and thence to bed, for tomorrow I am expecting Fany to pass this way with a view of stirring up a cross, and so the Chapel to the Blessed Martin will take another step forward.....

Black Swan

1114

4110



Yucca Gallery
giving on White Garden.

Immediately above,-
the Chapel.

note 4 lines near
door. These are the
four benches.

A. Blessed Martin
statue.

B. - Stained glass
window.

C. - Big old cross.

Memorandum:

Memorandum:

You will, of course, be perfectly entranced with one of my infrequent but nevertheless inimitable sketches. I have talked so much about the Saint's Chapel, of late, that I thought perhaps this bit of kindergarten design might make a little clearer all the stuff I have been writing.

Fany and Little King gave me a hand on Saturday morning, and the three of us contrived the cross and set up the stained glass. This coming week we shall do much more slapping about of white paint and rigging up details generally. The cross is to be painted, a foundation for the Blessed Martin, the benches and the floor and stationary blinds. With two sides of the Chapel being in mud, the white cross, benches, etc., will form a pleasant contrast, and what with a little altar contrived and spread with a snowy cloth, I think I ought to begin casting about for an almoner, preferably a colored one, and possibly of Protestant persuasion. In the event I strike a snag in getting the Chapel consecrated by the Catholic arm of the Church, I shall as gladly employ the services of some untutored layman of Ethiopian origin, and in the eyes of Him for whom such a project is designed, the institution, in my opinion, at least, will be as haly a place if thus dedicated, since the hocus-pocus part of the ceremony seems to me insignificant, as contrasted with the purpose for which the Chapel itself is contrived, don't you think so.

0111

4111

It goes without saying that I was delighted to have your elegant letter in Saturday's post, together with the enclosures from Mrs. Holloman. I appreciate your kindness in telling me as to what the letter regarding the Louvre canvas had to say. As for the stuff she tried to transcribe, in copying the ancient French text, please don't let that business worry you at all. If it is possible to get some gleaning of what the individual papers cover, that will be sufficient, and if that proves impossible, the disappointment will not be experienced since Postell with his portable photo-stat outfit will probably be here along in May to take a whack at the stuff in its original form which a person like your own good self might be able to make more out of than from the Holloman batch of second best guessing in the first go round.

And I beg you not to fret about finding time to write. You know that I realize perfectly how much the domestic and business demands on your time account for, and since our telepathy works in such perfection, I am always the more enchanted when I feel you are taking time to collapse a little when and if such an opportunity presents itself.

How wonderful that you should have discovered the Greenfield article in the theatrical journal, and withal so readily. I shall treasure it, as I need scarcely assure you. Perhaps I shall eventually pin Mrs. Holloman down long enough to get the Black Swan near the boiling point, - and then she can dwaddle around in the early Hatchitoches records as long as she pleases. What is to be hoped, of course, in the latter, is that some fragment in a manumission paper will indicate to whom she belonged before Marie Therese became free and in such a financial position as to undertake the building of Yucca and the sponsoring of a family that included Augustin, Suzanne, Louis and the rest.

Celeste told me before her departure yesterday that she had talked with the Rands while in Alexandria the other day and that Dr. Rand had expressed the hope of coming to spend a little time with me this afternoon. When it got to be 2 or 3 o'clock, and I saw nothing of them, I gave him a buzz and found him at home. He said his pulse got out of line last night, and his physicians had recommended he stay put today. He said he was so glad the beat got out of whack before he made the trip, otherwise they would be laying the blame on his frolic up and down the road. But now that he is assured that nothing can provoke the business as well as something, he will feel quite free to make a little round one day this coming week, when the weather is a little more pleasant. Low clouds and much dampness obtained all day yesterday and today, but around 4 or 5 o'clock this evening when a pale sun tried to break through for a while before folding up. And so closes a happy week end with the promise of much pulling and hauling during the ensuing work-a-day week, and I am already impatient for undertaking jobs of stuff.....

8111

4112

Monday, March 6th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It just occurs to me that I probably mis-dated yesterday's Memo the 6th instead of the 5th.

Be that as it may, full summer sunshine came back today, after several days of cloudy weather.

The plantation didn't labor, what with the dampness, inside and out, over the week end. What with a lot of trash to be cleared out of the Chapel, a flock of the friends turned to, and lent a hand,--Puny, "little King, Ezra, the Dark Duke, Yank, Peter, Paul and so on.

The net result is that I got the stuff out of the way and about everything in readiness for splashing some paint about, I reckon about tomorrow.

It's wonderful to me how much time can be consumed merely getting decks cleared to do something, and how dull the mere reading of such nonsense can be.

But from the Shreveport epistle, you will find an alternative, not much less dull, but probably the spelling, at least, maybe even more original than mine.

And as for what may be the lady's source for getting particulars about Cane River doings I cannot imagine. Mr. Brew hazarded the guess that some of "those old mulatto folks" must be working for her. The Dark Duke consulted later on the point, remarked that he didn't know who had more or less sense, --in the colored department, the mulatto or the negro, but he was mighty sure of one "black nigger what's they calls Log" what is going to have a scuffle with ole St. Peter long before he ever goes to work for such as that in Shreveport, --thereby displaying a heap of sense, it seemed to me, albeit I am bound to be a little prejudiced.

After all the cloudy weather of late, the dawn looked so transparent and the night so new washed, it was exhilarating to march up the road to spend a few hours attacking black berry bushes, now in full bloom. They have a bad habit of running all along the fence

SL14

4113

facing the Bermuda Road, and climbing over the tender shoots of the Louisiana Switch Cane that, with a few gaps, seems to be taking hold fairly well. The stuff is slow in getting established, but once it has finally made up its mind, it makes a wonder screen, which of course is precisely what we want in that quarter.

There is a wake in town tonight, and half the deeper hued local population will be swelling the crowds around Jackson Square, - I believe they call the place. The corpse is that of a woman living on the East bank of Red River in the Montgomery neighborhood, but half the world between Red and Little Rivers are kin, and so they stream to town, which must be a strange kind of a wake, the business carried on in a funeral home where, for all I know, half a dozen other knots of mourners for other newly departed souls must probably, on the law of averages, be assembled for the same purpose. I must make inquiry tomorrow to discover how anyone knows into which group he should place himself. I suspect the whole thing must be rather on the dull side, since probably the spirit of the town will have completely eliminated the rare quality that goes to make up a real deep-in-the-country wake.

I shall run the risk of repeating myself by remarking that when wakes are held locally in negro cabins, it is usually the custom for all the women to remain indoors, sitting about more or less in a circle, with the chairs or benches as far back against the wall as possible, leaving space for the coffin at one end of the room, and ample space for new-comers to view the remains. The men usually do not linger inside, but rather, after a visit of respect, join the others out of doors where for hours on end they will stand in one big group or several smaller ones, talking about all sorts of things, weather, crops, local gossip, almost everything, but quite in contrast to the subject uppermost in the minds of the ladies inside, the men almost never make any reference to the departed, unless there was some unusual circumstance connected with the death itself. Usually a series of bottles of varying qualities of wine or whiskey pass from hand to hand, the hardness of the liquor possibly exceeded only by the occasional rounds of black coffees which is brought to the men from time to time. It always fills me with wonder how these affairs can go on so indefinitely, for after the first three or four hours, I have usually had enough and am ready to leave. Perhaps everyone does remain not much longer than that, with the size of the group never increasing or decreasing much, what with new arrivals replacing those who have already been in attendance for a three or four hour stretch.

Something tells me a wake on these lines is not possible in a funeral home in town, and that the whiskey from a town honkey-tonk wouldn't seem the same, if drunk inside, and the drugstore coffees would lose much of its zest, consumed over a counter instead of in half darkness under the open sky. Forgive the length to which I have recounted all these details. Perhaps, if reports are adequate, I may counter with briefer ones on the morrow.....

SL14

4114

Handwritten:
Tuesday, 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I congratulate you and pin many an additional oak leaf upon your person for the elegant translations you made of the altogether baffling transcriptions made by Mrs. Holloman. I am afraid you pressed yourself unduly on these papers, however, and I am hoping that the photostats were taken more leisurely. But still I must thank you heartily for your noble industry and the excellence of your success, and thanks to your efforts, the picture of Marie Therese Coin-Goin comes into focus a little more clearly.

I had never thought before if the lady did or did not write, but the document, of course, shows she did not. Neither did her son, for that matter, and yet their gardeur didn't seem to hinge on such an acquirement.

Coincidence

Your speculation regarding the possibility, judging from the documents, that Marie Therese begot a child in slavery sounds conclusive. The presence of the name Le Comte, subsequently spelled in a variety of ways in legal papers, all such names, being from a common ancestor, I take it, interested me ever so much. For it was the Frudhommes whose lands in early times bounded the lands of colored people on the North, and it was the Le Comtes or Lecomptes which adjoined them on the South. I may have mentioned before that Lecomptes owned Magnolia and two of their daughters married Hertzogs, accounting for the present name as owner of Magnolia. Old Mr. Lecompte gained considerable wealth by marrying a Buard heiress. Assuming that Yucca was an old established plantation by the 1794's and 1795's, and remembering that the person of color quite naturally leaned more or less in legal matters on white people, it seems but natural the Marie Therese Coin-Goin and her neighbor, Le Comte, might well have appeared before the proper authorities to transact legal papers, since the name of a white man on such documents would be more likely than that of a second colored person to back up the word of the petitioner.

I have run through these documents but once, but shall have another go at them tomorrow, and shall undoubtedly find some other particulars upon which I shall want to speculate a little with you.

It is heartening to know that after so many busy weeks, the present one in one segment at least may have eased a little, and if only you are taking this opportunity for a breathing spell and not additional work on my behalf with these old papers, I shall be happy indeed.

4115

My hands are rough and dry tonight, for I have been working most of the day in transplanting things at Arenbourg, - and the earth somehow always leaves the hands feeling so dry, while the balance of the day I spent in arranging bricks at Melrose, helping two or three men I had to assist me in putting down little aprons at the side gate between the big house and J. H.'s, - which for the past 50 years has been a mud puddle, - the ground under the gate, more than the gate itself, - and a like apron under the Yucca gate which also, so long as I have known the place has been too soggy in damp times. The Madam was forever saying: "As soon as J. H. goes to St. Louis....." --and Chicago served just as good for the current purpose. While at the business, I put down a couple of little brick aprons between the two pillars at each extreme of the gallery, giving on the White Garden, - the brick pavement of last week merely covering the space where the gallery flooring originally was, while today's little aprons I extended out on to the green sward in the lawn. None of these undertakings could possibly be worth mentioning, except as they indicate how on the jump I have been, and, I suppose, too, that I really do feel a certain satisfaction in knowing that after half a century these little items, so inconsequential in themselves, have at last been accomplished, - and it killingly enough, such things have to be undertaken for the benefit of others when they are not present to oppose. It's just a piece of that inherited quirk which used to result in soggy, half rotten wood being palmed off on the big house and all the little houses each winter, because the autumn supply had always to be saved until the preceeding year's supply had been used up, with the result that instead of ever having this year's supply, nobody ever got anything but last year's which had been saved to decay all year to use up the preceeding year's cordage. If I never did anything more than break that vicious circle years ago, life wouldn't have been in vain. And in 1950 we shall have islands of brick pavement in mud puddle places, and since I wear boots when it is wet, it doesn't matter a whit to me, but I think it will be a heap easier on the soles of such as the merchant planter who uses the pathways the most and is ever the most unmindful of the hazards, even though he never wears boots or rubbers. It's a curious set up alright, but breaking the thing down at one point or another every once in a while is a heap of fun.

I read a little more from Chaucer which, or some of which, turns out to be quite Rabelaisian than I had supposed. Perhaps my first attempts at reading it years ago in the ancient English let a lot slip by me. Mr. A. Scourby does his usual polished job, telling each tale in quite a different voice, which is an accomplishment in itself, quite aside from the smooth rendition of the whole business. And so to Tender Lead and tender pillow....

4116

Wednesday, March 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Bright and sunny with a breeze off the ice cakes from the Arctic which the sun never seemed to be able to do anything about.

I began the day at Arenbourg, but after a couple of hours decided both Peter and I were getting no where, except when we would kindle us a fire and stand about, doing what we could to help out the sun.

And so we returned to Yucca where we went in for painting of sorts. At first dark tonight, the four pews I painted in white looked pretty spotty, the paint being applied a little too heavily in places. But a second coat will fix up a smoother surface alright. I also gave the big old cross a first coat, while Peter painted the frame of the stained glass window and the facing about the double blinds giving onto the White Garden. The Chapel is beginning to take on shape and a vague atmosphere, and second coats of paint can be slapped on any old time between now and the end of summer, for the effect has been achieved and the details may be applied at any old odd moment. Personally, when undertaking such a job, - not that it is my habit to contrive Chapels frequently, but whenever I am trying to set a thing in order, I like to drive straight through to the end without interruption. But the Weather Man promises the wind will move around toward the Gulf during the night, and so at dawn tomorrow I shall undertake another go-round at Arenbourg, probably with Andy, for I want to slay a lot of black berry bushes, etc., so the Louisiana Switch Cane can make the most of it growth, meager at best, during the ensuing season.

Sooner or later Louisiana will begin feeling the effects of the Mississippi Pilgrimage season, I expect. I have done so little radio listening of late that it is no wonder I have heard no publicity from the Natchez neighborhood. The clerk tells me he has seen but a couple of lines in print announcing the opening of this year's doings. If memory serves, Miss Myra never made a peep about it in her letter of last week, although she must have been slap on the threshold. Be that as it may, the tide will begin flowing before long and the ebb and flow will swirl in this direction before

3114

4117

I have well started with my paint pots and my weed knives.

And speaking of Miss Myra reminds me that in acknowledgment of her letter the other day, I remarked upon the pleasure I was experiencing in running through Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, and how much I wished we might have a go at them together, what with her enthusiasm for the Reading Machine which she had before mentioned as having been in operation some place or other. It happened that I had just finished the first Tale, which was beautifully and sedately done, - a Greek mythological thing and quite suitable "to be put in all mains".

Picture my consternation when a night or two later, I followed the Knight's Tale by that of the Miller's Tale, which so out does the Rabelasian element in Boccaccio, - or should adjective the proper names be re-adjusted, that if Miss Myra, on my suggestion, dips into the Miller's naughtiness, she will certainly think I am both lewd and brazen.

The wind was so cold today that plantation work was suspended, save for the cement block laying on the new garage. Fortunately every day of late seems to provide a funeral for those who find they have time on their hands. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday have each had services in one graveyard or another, and the killing part of it is that I don't seem to know or ever have heard of any of the people playing the final but stellar role.

There is a typical "ring-around-the-rosie" scandal going on locally, and withal stirred in such a fashion as could be duplicated almost nowhere else, it would seem to one like me who gets around so little. The widow Brown, - a bag with half a dozen children, and mama of Little Elam, is currently the wife of Sam Peace, but as an unmarried lady, draws a fat check monthly from the Welfare Office, which, with Sam's assistance, - for his mama is on old age pension, the widow Brown is able to maintain a car which she purchased in Little Elam's name since she thought it might not look right for a lady on Welfare to be buying automobiles. Little Elam who maintains his family in a separate menage, is his mama's chauffeur on occasion, but they had a spat and so the widow Brown, since Sam doesn't drive, gets Little King to whisk her about from honkey-tonk to honkey-tonk. Little Elam, naturally, I suppose, doesn't like that arrangement, but neatly cuts himself a piece of pie by stepping out from his own hearth stone when the widow Brown is abroad with her new chauffeur, - who is Little King, and Little Elam thus assists Mrs. King Solomon, Jur., to while away the hours while her husband is thus employed. Isn't Cane River wonderful, and perhaps, after all, the Canterbury Tales aren't so ancient, after all, when read along this bend of the river....

3114

4118

Thursday, March 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

One of those odds and ends days wherein nothing in particular seems to have been accomplished, but one somehow seems to have been busy.

We had quite a frost last night which did its usual twists and turns, "cooking" the elephant ears but doing no harm at all to some canas in full flower along side.

The air was frosty when Andy and I, a little before sun up, headed up the Bermuda Road. We got quite a lot accomplished in giving a breathing space to the Switch Cane, marking out places the while where new roots must be set in again.

After a brief breakfast at Melrose, I returned to Arenbourg until 10:15 when the Knipmeyers were due. And so the day played out, jumping from one place to another, and thankful withal that no pilgrims showed up.

The breeze has moved around to the South East, and will be slap off the Gulf on the morrow, which will mean high readings in the 80's instead of in the 70's as obtained today.

Ever so long ago, if memory serves, I believe you made mention of a volume called "Audubon's America" which came out along about 1940, I believe. In any event, the item came to hand today, and so if I get around to the literary department tonight, I think I shall put aside Mr. Chaucer's Pilgrims for a while and see what the present volume has to offer. I dipped into the first page this noon for about 2 minutes and was impressed by the author's observation that perhaps old James J. was more widely acquainted with the America of the first half of the 19th century than any of his contemporaries. I had never thought about his wide acquaintances, both geographically and in the human department, - "a fried alike of Daniel Boone and Daniel Webster", and the startling contrast of two such personalities made the impression the deeper, I expect.

I hope I can keep awake for five minutes or so, for I feel sure a whole series of delights are ahead, although that conclusion is arrived at mere y from things mentioned of the volume a long time back, - plus the once sentence or phrase mentioned above.

I am pleased to say that the postman traveled light today in first class mail, which gives me an excuse to

8114

4119

slide over the correspondence department lightly. Yesterday I had such a batch of trash, - polite nothings from various quarter which had to be acknowledged but duller than dull.

I understand James Aswell is in New York this week, - on business, I suppose. It would seem to be an excellent time for me to contact his wife for a sitting, but she is probably busy, and I know I am. It will be fun to wait and see what, if anything happens to the reported portrait.

J. H. telephoned from Chicago this afternoon, saying they are scheduled to get back here tomorrow (Friday) around midnight. It is my understanding that next week he heads out for Washington, D. C., -- some Cotton Board meeting or some such, I suppose. A while back he had to resign from one or more Boards, - off hand it would seem that it might have been Federal, but on the other hand, one of the resignations was from the L. S. U. Board, I believe. The thing hinged on the fact that for which ever it is, the State or Federal, one is prohibited from holding down more than so many jobs concurrently, so I take it the L. S. U. Board must have been less lucrative than some of the others.

I used to wonder what would happen if all this flying about should reverse itself, but then I remember the time when Lyle was complaining about how nice Weeks Hall used to be until he got on the water wagon, and how impossible he was to live with during such, - fortunately brief, periods. Later I had an opportunity to see how Mr. Saxon himself behaved when he, too, climbed aboard the same vehicle, and only then did I fully appreciate just what he had in mind when speaking of Weeks in a like situation. And so perhaps it is just as well that the flying about the country is ever so much to be desired, for the alternative is impossible to imagine and possibly were any of them ever to turn stationary, life really would be but different.

I caught a glimpse of Little Grandpa's two surviving off spring today. They remain atop the pillar on Celeste's gallery, and look as fat as butter balls. The little yellow one, colored in honor of Grandpa, must have succumbed to the wolves, but the two gray ones, and mighty uninteresting in design, seem to be in the pink. In the mean time, both Grandpa and Little Grandpa seem to be falling down on their job, for I saw a big old field rat running along the pickets of a garden fence today. At the dinner and supper tables of late, we have been dining on Swift or Armoir's finest frozen chicken, and what with the plentiful supply of bones, the cats must have grown disinterested in food on the hoof. But too much nonsense has already been reported, and so I break off for a dip into Audubon's America....

4120

4120

Friday, March 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

My face feels as drawn and dry as though I had been out in one of Dora's Oklahoma blasts. I guess I scrubbed too hard with turpentine to get paint off. I must cast about in my medicine chest and see if I can't find some greasy stuff to take out the pucker before folding up my beard.

Things popped on all the labor fronts today, and tonight I shall probably not get far with Mr. Audubon's America, but that is from sleepiness and not from lack of interest in the volume, for it is a grand item, I find.

I headed out early for Arenbourg where Peter had the disks going early, and the whole terrace and the drive were gone over and over, and all in all, I reckon the Johnson Grass must be feeling miserable tonight, I hope.

Back at Melrose for Breakfast, - and why with a big B, I know not, except, perhaps subconsciously I remember having an appetite after the bracing breeze on the terrace, - and putting thereafter a couple of youths to work at digging Switch Cane, in anticipation of tomorrow's additional setting in of the same at Arenbourg along the Bermuda Road.

And thence to work on St. Martin's Chapel at Yucca, determined to finish that item today or bust; - and I guess I did about both.

Chapel
I reckon the floor probably hadn't been scrubbed in a quarter of a century, and, Br r r r other, I did that floor get a scrubbing. I sent up to the honkey-tonk where the unmarried boys were dallying, since only the married men were working today, and down came Murrell a-jumpin'. Mops and paint brushes, church pews and crosses, were all flying about with unbelievable abandon. Net result: - the Chapel really looks like something, in nothing more, indeed, than impoverished gentility.

From the depths of an old pit, I discovered a big old lantern, perhaps 2 and a half to 3 feet in height. It is after the manner of the one on the post appearing in your painting of "Melrose, but a little larger. By some miracle, only a couple of the glasses, --there should have been 8, --were gone. I put the thing in the bath tub, scrubbing it madly with tons of soap suds, following the bath of Lux by a hot-hot shower, after which I rigged up some kind of a suspending business, and hung the thing from a rafter in the very center of the chapel. I reckon one might scarcely notice it, on first entering the place, but before one got far, it will catch the eye, and somehow it gives the place just the right touch of ante bellum feeling.

OS14

4121

Back and forth to Arenbourg a couple of times and then the idea struck me that a half dozen big old flower pots, adequate to hold 4 to 6 cannas each, ought to be done something with, and so I scurried about and found some red and yellow cannas in bloom, and these I transplanted, scattering them at vantage points along the brick gallery, and wondering how it was that I tried to pass for having sense when fiddling around with such items was certainly out of order with so much other business to hand.

But one thing led to another and before I knew it, I had potted a few butterfly lilies, too, which I shall probably want to park along side the great cauldron when July blows hot and I should be satisfied with the billions of the same stuff growing all over the place. But that seems to be the way I garden, - not so much on variety as on stressing the types I like, and never being satisfied that I have enough of what I love most.

And so the day unrolled, and it must make tiresome reading. I hope the Weather Man may be wrong, for he threatens rain tonight and tomorrow, which, if the rains do come, means that I shall not get much done any place on Saturday. But still, I blush when I think of the amount of neglected desk work that awaits me, and perhaps a little shower will provide some recompense, although I must say I should like to put a couple of things more in order at Arenbourg before I take up this Underwood for a prolonged sitting with same.

Reverting to the Audubon volume again, I must remark upon the interesting fashion in which the author handles the material, and how thus far, - he doesn't seem to have given the unusual amount of space that so many biographers of James J. have devoted to the Fines of Oakley Plantation. And curiously enough he sets aside quite a few references to Beechwood, the old Sterling home where "re. Audubon" taught for several years. I used to walk over to Beechwood from The Cottage when staying with Miss Louise, but while I realized at the time that Mrs. A. had taught in the little school house at The Cottage, I hadn't realized until now that the adjoining Beechwood was the same Sterling home where poor little Miss Lucy had busied herself while friend-husband was busy with his birds.

Well, so things turn, and next week will be a other week, and perhaps I shall do better in the correspondence department. I realize only too well how infinitely tiresome my recent communications must have been. I shall try to perk up a little after getting through with Monday's pilgrims, 40 strong.....

OS14

4122

Sun.
March 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How noble of you, and in spite of your illness, to undertake such a piece of work, and how grandly you have transcribed and translated the ancient Natchitoches documents.

Your grand, grand letter to hand in Saturday's post, together with the Registered letter containing the photostatic material and all.

I cannot begin to say which swells me more with pride and gratitude, -- your tremendous industry or the excellence with which your grand work has been executed. The material itself contains so much of interest that I shall run through it several times within the next few days, - I have already gone through it twice, - once yesterday and again today, and shall make another tour on the morrow and so on.

It might be illuminating to discover if Ruth Cross did much research about the St. Denis family in her book on that gentleman. I think she published under the name of Ruth Cross, although she was married at the time she wrote the book at Melrose, and it may be listed on the name of Ruth Cross Palmer. If she gives some genealogy, some of the names appearing in the will of Mme. de St. Denis might come into better focus. Among other things, it seems to me in connection with that family that de Meziere married a daughter of St. Denis, which would account for the presence of his name, - possibly on behalf of his wife, - in Mme. de St. Denis' will.

The pressure of many and varied demands on my time and concentration over this week end, - and all of them pleasant but distracting, - I have failed thus far to bring forth a clear cut concept of the life history of Marie Therese Coin-Coin, as revealed by documents thus far produced. Off hand it seems to me the thing might run thus, - but this is pure conjecture: - Could it be that the future builder of Yucca was, as a child, the slave of St. Denis whose widow bequeathed her to one of the St. Denis children; that for some reason or other, she was manumitted in 1758; that sometime during the next ten years she met Thomas Metoyer, and in 1768 begot her first born children, - the twins Augustin and Suzanne, by T. Metoyer, and that sometime between her manumission in 1752 and the birth of her last child, - 6 mulattoes or 8 in all, - that she built Yucca, the African House, etc. Do let me

SS14

4123

know how this picture puzzle shapes up in your own good mind. It's a better story than anyone prior to this year of grace, 1950, ever dreamed about, for, of course, nobody ever bothered about inquiring about her until now, being always content to follow the easier line of merely concentrating on her son who was certainly a remarkable man, but not by half was he remarkable when stacked up against his mother's remarkable career.

Tomorrow I shall run over these papers and the earlier ones you sent last week, and see how much of a picture I can make of the several, when all pieced together. In the mean time, I shall be glad to have your ideas on the chronological development of the lady.

Again my sincerest thanks to you for your nobility in setting alight so many beacons for me, and thanks to your skillful handling of the lamp, my way to comprehending this fascinating course across the Louisiana country of the 18th century will be made possible.

On the home front, J. A. and Celeste returned from Chicago in the wee hours of Saturday. Both declared they wouldn't feel the impulse to head out for Chicago again, -- but ever, it all seemed to cold and gray and somehow lacking in the atmosphere that made last year's trip at this time to "anhattan so delightful.

Celeste came over on Saturday morning. On the back gallery, I asked her to open the doors to St. Martin's Chapel. Her reaction was a little different than I had expected, so far as her expression of the first impulse made itself manifest. Instead of exclaiming "ow darling" or some such, she just stood there, said nothing for a long inute, and then, as though genuinely moved, turned back to me and said:

"I have only known this spot as a n old catch-all for the last twenty five years, a place I never wanted to venture toward. My first impression of it at this moment is simply this, - that while the African house is different, this spot from here on will always be the most precious on Melrose for me." That was sweet of her, and I really think she meant it.

Clemence passed by on Saturday noon. She liked it. I commissioned her to do a religious scene, - a baptising or some such, as the Chapel's only oil. But I couldn't linger with her, as Puny and I had all the persimmons to graft on Arenbourg, - but of that at another sitting.

I return the two slips, in full appreciation of your position. Mine is this: - Thanks to the unfailing kindness of Lydia Lee, things go on at Arenbourg. It will be nice keeping this account, no matter how trifling, intact as long as possible, and it will make me happy knowing you hold a slip that can be filled out, if and when.....

SS14

4124

Monday, March 13th, 1950.
The day was a - , yabruat do what al head...
Memorandum: ...
A chill rain during the morning, chillier sunshine during the afternoon, and we made the most of it. - Elam, Beau, the Dark Duke and Peter, all of whom lent me a hand both at Arenbourg and Yucca, ...
But in yesterday's Memo, I believe I touched on work at Arenbourg on Saturday with Puny. It was warm and what with the persimmons in leaf, we put out from 30 to 40 grafts, all of which, I think, have a splendid chance to "take".

With one or two possible exceptions, all the persimmons along the drive were equipped with three types of wood, so that when they come into fruit, each tree will hang forth clusters of the small oriental persimmon, the large "apanese type with the indentation around the upper center of the fruit, as though a string had been tied around it during growth, and a third variety, being the large, beautifully orange fruit of the unrecorded strain, into which I went at such length during the late autumn. Puny is adept at such business and I was glad to lend him a hand in the doings, for the whole process is interesting and I like smearing around with the pot of bee's wax, trying to lend Nature a hand in effecting a perfect operation. Now if only the patient doesn't die, all should go swimmingly.

This afternoon, back at Yucca, St. Martin's Chapel got a few extra touches of white paint, and that was fun because the boys who assisted were motivated by the sport of the business, and a heap of odds and ends were given a nice fresh coat of paint. The big stationary blinds, giving on the white garden, were painted, and if you have ever indulged in painting blinds, you need not be told of the problems involved, what with two surfaces, inside and out, being almost imperative to be handled at the same stroke of the brush. At I, ...
We also took down a big old column standing in one corner of the Chapel, - a duplicate of the one forming the base of the sundial, and gave that a once over with a steel brush to take off the 1836 coat of paint, applying a fresh coat afterward. And so on and so forth during the afternoon, which sped by ever so swiftly, what with everyone working like beavers and much giggling and laughter accompanying the business.

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MS1P

4125

It's wonderful to me how news gets around. I suppose Celeste must have been in town on Saturday, - she went to South Louisiana Sunday to pick up Madam Regard, - for this afternoon I had a telephone from town from some lady, unknown to me, who said she had heard of the new Chapel to St. Martin at Melrose and asked if she might bring down a couple of Reverend Fathers with her to view the same. I told her the rumors reaching her must have been out of proportion to facts, that it was true there was a little cubby hole that had a cross in it, but even the cross had been removed for restoration proposes and that only the thing would not be in order for how long I did not know. In short, the answer was but No. After all, following in the tracks or rather tracks of the Sage of Ferney, this Chapel is going to be more dedicated to God than to the clerics, and most definitely it is not going to be a pilgrimage item, don't you think so?

I got around to read another page or two from the Audubon's America volume, and was delighted with Audubon's story, quoted directly from one of his published works, about the Runaway slave. (I am forever finding myself writing a big letter, as in Runaway, and a small letter for the noun it modifies, and I know not why.) As this episode happened in Louisiana where Audubon was living at the time, I take it to have been Oakley or Beechwood, and yet from his account of having gone ten miles westward beyond his place of residence, I can't figure the thing out exactly, for ten miles west of either plantation would have taken him slap across the Mississippi and not through a canebrake, as described. These little details, of no consequence whatsoever, are nevertheless fun to fathom, if possible, when trying to establish the precise routes old James J. traveled in this section of the country.

In another chapter, most of which is quoted directly from one of Audubon's books, is the story of his one and only encounter with rascals wherein his life was threatened. He referred to, - or possibly the editor mentioned, the death of Merriweather Lewis on the Natchez Trace at the hands of scoundrels. It struck me on reading this that if historians have mentioned Lewis' murder in accounts of the Trace, it may well be that in reading the same in times gone by, I failed to identify it in my own mind the name of Merriweather Lewis with the Lewis and Clarke Expedition. I suspect there are millions of people who may have heard of the Lewis and Clarke business, but wouldn't be able to give the first name of either explorer, so that the casual reader of Trace history might well stumble across the account of the murder of Merriweather Lewis, and so never associate it with the great exploit of T. Jefferson's administration.

Well, I see this Memo has gone completely historical if not literary, and so I had better fold up at this point before getting bogged down in some other matter of secondary interest.....

MS1P

4126

Tuesday, March 14th, 1950.
Memorandum: I have just received the postman's letter of the 14th.

The postman rang twice and thrice today..... To hand your elegant letter, plus the Eliza Greenfield article in the theatrical publication, plus the Manhattan telephone book. An interruption prevented me from quite finishing your letter, but I reckon my assistant secretary may be passing this way later tonight, and so I shall undoubtedly have the balance before bed time. I laughed at your gay description of your preparedness for an Arctic blast when leaving home in the midst of a snow squall, only to discover full summer sun blazing as you emerged from the subway downtown. It has often seemed odd to me that Dallas and Shreveport should be having such different atmospheric conditions from Melrose, but the Concourse versus 42nd Street is an even more striking twist.

We had a heavy frost last night, but now that we are passing the "Ides of March", perhaps we shall all be escaping chances of much more blizzards for this season.

It is so good to hear you voice the prospect of eventually turning thoughts with view to a little outing in this direction. If at all possible, I trust it may be accomplished before the intense heat of summer sets in. I need scarcely remark upon the welcome that will always be yours whenever the proper moment seems convenient for you. It is nice to avoid holidays in this area, if possible, so as to avoid too great a concentration of Henrys, but that is of but secondary consideration, for the important thing is that you give yourself a little trip whenever it is convenient for you, and the chips may fall where they please. As for myself, in regard to the prospect, I am going to continue to "hold the thought".

In your characteristic thoughtfulness, you marked the magazine so that I could turn to the portrait of Madam Greenfield without need for any search whatsoever. There chanced to be several people at the store when I went for the mail, and J. A. asked me to meet them, and before I left, Celeste came in, and while chatting with some other people passing that way, I couldn't resist opening the magazine, so that on my way home, walking with Celeste, I called her attention to the picture, and she expressed her astonishment at how you find time to do all the wonderful things you do for me. She echoed my sentiments but precisely.

4127

I am really appreciative of the Manhattan telephone book, for while at the moment I cannot think of any address I need at this moment, I know perfectly well that I shall have occasion to refer to it often. I have always kept one of Natchez, New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport to hand, and I find I am forever using them, as I shall be turning to the present arrival in days to come.

What with a brilliant sun all day, I did quite a bit of jumping about, although a cool wind and a thermometer reading in the 50's did a lot to encourage my industry to keep circulation brisk. It was one of those days when I seem to have little to show for my labors, although I did get quite a bit of trimming and pruning done. Returning to Yucca from Arenbourg a little after 4, I found that as I arrived by the back garden, the Dark Duke was just entering Yucca by the gate on the front. It seems he had been telling her about the doings in the garden, and she had asked if she might sometime be brought to see it. Of course I was glad the place was back in order again after all of yesterday's doings, and I took them both in, closing the doors behind us, and thus we sat in the little curd white pews for half an hour, looking at the pretty reds and blues of the stained glass and remarking upon this or that feature yet to be undertaken. Maxine is a simple, kindly soul, and while I seldom see her more than once in a year, it is always pleasant when Log does bring her around for a little chat.

Clemence, looking like something just out of a hand box, passed this way this noon. She wanted to have another look at the Chapel and the white frame in which I plan to place her "baptism" opus, should the thing turn out suitable for the place intended. A negro primitive in such a place, nailed against the mud walls of the place, ought to be ever so harmonious. I should think. But Clemence is expert in contriving surprises, and there is no telling what she will eventually contrive, for while it may turn out to be something folk-lore-ish with a religious flavor, knowing her as I do, I shall be quite prepared to discover on examination that she will have tossed off a 3 ring circus, or some such.

The Editor's note in the Audubon book, relative to Joseph Mason makes me wonder why I never did investigate that character a little more. You will recall that it was Mason who did the foliage in so many of Audubon's pictures, and excellence is cited in such early plates as -- plates 2, 5, 12, etc., being cited. Audubon thought the boy was 18 but in reality he was but 13, and lived to apparent ripe maturity, dying in the 1880's. I am wondering if he did any other illustrating comparable to the backgrounds of the Birds of America. -- Such a nice day, thanks to that thrice ringed postman and you....

4128

Wednesday, March 15th, 1950.

Memorandum: It has rained all day, pouring all morning, drizzling all afternoon, with a gauge like mist plotting out the black of night. I did no work outside at all, although I did manage to accomplish quite a few odds and ends things inside.

I guess it must have rained out my secretariat, too, for one has showed up as yet, but since the mail was light and some of my friends could spell out a few letters, I waded through whatever stuff there was, and so shall have an opportunity to run through your list of yesterday more carefully again tonight, should any one show up, and I am hoping to get a glance at the article in the magazine, too, about Eliza Greenfield, and in writing the name recalls to mind that under her picture in the magazine, I believe, the caption gives her the name of her mistress, -- Elizabeth, only going to prove how difficult it seems to be to do any research without finding some point or other at variance with others.

I wanted to thank you yesterday for passing along so many interesting points in your letter that space prevented me from making reference to at our last sitting. It was most kind of you to offer to let me borrow the clipping quoting the Secretary of State in his staunch affirmation of friendship for Alger Hiss. By some rare chance, I had heard a 15 minute discussion of his statement on the radio, and was able to hear the whole thing. I agree with you that it is outrageous the way some of the Senators, particularly those from the Northern tier of States seem to feel perfectly free to ruin every one's reputation with complete impunity, and I suppose it is their freedom from suit that impells them to sling custard pies at people, knowing full well that they cannot be sued for slander. That old Waxy or Nebraska or where ever, and the one you mentioned from Wisconsin seem to be particularly offensive in such doings. Personally I can't understand how the jury arrived at the Hiss verdict, for it seems to me the whole thing was a mighty flimsy business. And to think that anyone of his standing should be railroaded to jail on charges leveled by somebody like Whitaker Chambers seems almost impossible.

8314

4129

I had heard nothing of the maritime difficulties in the Baltimore area, but it is good to know that apparently the tanker got away before the pot started boiling over. The power of Harry Bridges on the West Coast came in for discussion some time last summer when some friend of Pat's was here, after having graduated from Stanford or some such place out there. George Mouton was the youths' name, and he had circulated quite a bit with the union crowd, purely as an interested spectator but never as a member. He admired Harry Bridges for many of his undoubted examples of being sufficiently clever to put over what he wants. I was impressed by George's statement, however, that no one ever hears of any other personality in the West Coast shipping circles, except Bridges, who is said to get rid of anyone in the organization whose success in minor problems suggests he is suitable for or as material for the Bridges job, and thus by eliminating all top-notch people in the governing group of the union, Bridges succeeds in keeping the headlines exclusively for himself. I have often wondered if something like this happens in the John L. Lewis set up. You will be amused at the enclosure. Good old Postell refers to it as "Miss Enthusiasm" and, in responding to him, I usually write it as a single word, "Missenthusiasm" and notice he is beginning to ponder on what it is that sweeps her off her feet into one strange direction or another, and I am glad she is currently trying to get caught up with an Indian while I continue to digest the photostatic translations before passing them along to her.

Yuan as I talked with Dr. Rand this morning and was enchanted to hear him answer the phone. He said he has been going to his office from 3 to 5 daily of late, and that, of course, is wonderful news, indicating, as it does, that he is undoubtedly on the mend. He said a couple of his grandchildren were getting their tonsils out today and Friday, and that his son, Paul King Rand, M.D., is a flying down from his home in Hartford, Conn., on Saturday, or possibly Sunday, and so they may not make it to Elrose this week end, but that the plans to come for a nice long visit one day next week.

Most of my afternoon and evening was spent in a fine piece of pie, this afternoon and nearly as good as down in the thing, along with Peter's help. One of the curtains of my bed seemed to have loosened from the supporting ring at the top of the tester. We decided the only thing to do was to remove said tester, which sounds simple enough, but is quite a handful with the thing resting about ten feet in a skyward direction from the floor, is both heavy and cumbersome, and because of its ancient gathering of fine, faded material, cannot be rested - first on anything from the time one picks up the tester from its ten foot resting place and places the thing flat on the floor. We did the thing and repaired the proper gages and got the thing back, but just how I am not sure. Tomorrow, being warm, ought to be grand for weed pulling at Arenbourg, and I shall accordingly be astir early.....

1814

4130

Thursday, March 16th, 1950.

Full Spring with billions of things to be done and not too much accomplished. Still, Thursday always taking a toll of time, I guess everything went along alright, considering the day of the week.

Either in this or under separate cover, I'll send along a couple of enclosures. You will like the one from Helen Baldwin who somehow succeeds in making even her "misere" take on an hilarious note. Mrs. Coombs dropped by for a few minutes this afternoon on her way to Alexandria. She had a most extraordinary story to tell which I shall pass along even though it be a bit involved. About a year ago, her mother, living in a house by herself in Alexandria was quite ill and Dr. and Mrs. Coombs used to run down to spend as much time as they could with her, parking their car on the street in front of the house. One day a huge truck backed out from a driveway across the street, smashing the Coombs car pretty badly. The construction company, owners of the truck, had the Coombs car taken to some rather large car concern in Alexandria and put back in shape again. Mrs. Coombs called at the repair plant a couple of times on appointed dates to pick up the car, but as she had to return to Matchitoches, she left instructions on her second visit that the car be delivered to the address of her mother, where later, on returning to call on her mother, she picked it up.

For about a year her mother has been receiving most alarming telephone calls. A man, calling himself "Cathy" or "Ketchy" or some such would ring the lady up at the oddest hours, use perfectly outrageous language to her, frequently on sex subjects, and assure her that on such and such a date he would come to her house, and would probably murder her before he left. The police tapped the telephone wire but the calls were so infrequent that the call when made, was somehow never traced. Once Mrs. Coombs sister was present when the call came through and once Mrs. Coombs son was with his grandmother. It must have been pretty nerve racking. But now, after a year, the culprit has been caught. In his last telephone call, he said that that particular day was going to be lucky for him and unlucky for her. To keep him talking, she inquired the reason. He said because the G. I. check he was owing to receive would be worth \$295.00 -- good news for him, and that night he would kill her, -- bad news for her.

4131

A check through the Veteran's Bureau, narrowed down possibilities and under Sheriff Kelly's supervision, Mrs. Coombs mother was asked to telephone the automobile plant, saying she was speaking from the Veteran's Bureau and wanted to talk with someone there regarding their check for \$295.00. The loud speaker in the plant put the call out on a public address system, calling for somebody by the nickname, - unknown to people at the plant, - but recognized by the veteran to whom the check was due. Mrs. Coombs' mother recognized the voice immediately, and the culprit was nabbed. He turned out to be a very light mulatto and among other things in his possession, they found a list of elderly, wealthy women, - people such as Mrs. Wetmore, Mrs. Hemingway and others whom I chance to know. Why he should have compiled such a list, if he has been using it, or merely contemplated using it, no one seems to know. It is assumed he must have taken names from slips in the plant, giving addresses to which cars were to be delivered.

And now what to do with the fellow - put in jail, turned over to a Government Psychopathic Hospital, - with a good chance of him being turned loose shortly, - or what, Odd tale, isn't it.

For dinner today came three R. E. A. officials, and talk was light but rather amusing in spots. As it was a bachelor's gathering, some of the jokes were a little on the thin edge, and here is one I thought rather good:

A pair of robins set up housekeeping, - newly wed, and the male was mighty proud of his dashing wife. The nest all neatly in order, the female labored mightily and brought forth a blue-blue egg which proud husband thought the most beautiful in the world. The next day the female repeated the process and the male's pride in his spouse knew no bounds. On the third day, the wife begot another, but when the husband stepped up to the edge of the nest to admire, he was crest-fallen. The egg, instead of being a beautiful robin's egg blue was just a nasty brown. Naturally he eyed his wife and started a racket, whereupon the wife blurted out:

"Oh, stop making such a fuss. After all, I only did it for a lark."

Well, so much for the feathered side of Spring, but there is a news item in the haying department that pleases me, for after fussing for a year on my own hook, the plantation, - at long last, - has bought a motor lawn mower, so that the greenswards at Elrose may be in better order from here on out. A dozen years ago they had one but J. A. insisted the plantation simply can't make them work, what with the colored operators always insisting on taking them apart and not putting them back together again. But today we got one, - and I am hoping J. A. may be proven wrong. At least the grass got cut once all around for this season, and the thing hasn't played out yet, so I am holding the thought.....

4132

Friday, March 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

and as I have found myself thinking of you so often today, wondering if the descendants of old St. Patrick were cluttering up 5th Avenue with their old parades, and making navigation about Manhattan as difficult as cross-town travel usually is on this date. Come to think of it, it was on the 17th of March that the P. D. R.'s were married, wasn't it.

Well, in these parts, the weather has been perfect, and now that day is done I find I am tired and satisfied with being so, for it was one of those work-a-day times when one can glance back at it, feeling that something has been accomplished.

I can't think off hand what makes me so puffed up with satisfaction, for there was a lot of squirrel in the revolving wheel about it, but I did get in some good licks at Arenbourg, and that always seems to please me regardless.

I don't think much of privet for hedges, but still it is better than none, and what with some excellent plants coming to hand, I set out a line of them from the corner of the Bermuda Road, along the South line fence, slap to the Alphonse gate. In a couple of years these will be high enough to cut the view from the road, and in the mean time, if circumstances afford, I shall plant Switch Cane in between the privet, and although the growth of the latter will be slow, it will eventually dominate the privet. I started counting the number of plants, perhaps 2 to 3 feet in height, which I set out, but I lost track, but roughly I should guess a hundred more or less, and probably more.

Eventually they can be chopped out in years to come, but in the mean time they will serve their purpose, and so the green screen isolating Arenbourg from the outside world rises.

On returning from the Post Office a little after 9, I found the Dark Duke had passed this way during my absence, either at Arenbourg or across the fence, and finding some paint pots

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he had gone to work on the stationary blinds in the Chapel wing, - and for the balance of the day busied himself, doing a very neat job on those facing the garden and those giving on the African House. During the afternoon, while Andy was busy helping me at Arenbourg, I returned to Ucea to find little Sam had joined Log and the two of them were swishing paint brushes for all they were worth.

It was then that the first prayer was enunciated in the Chapel. And quite unexpected it was, too. The Dark Duke, in admiring the stained glass, pointed to one that was especially pretty - a terracotta - and as his finger touched it, - a beautifully amethyst pane, it crashed and broke. Poor Dark Duke, he leaped in the air, as it was falling, crying in supplication to the Lord to save the pieces.

As I saw the thing falling, I faded out of the picture, so that when the pieces had been gathered up, I had returned, bearing a duplicate, the sight of which seemed to stun Log as much as his anguish over the destruction of the other. It chanced that I had one extra pane, and although I had completely forgotten its whereabouts until that moment, the memory returned automatically, and it was after the relief that Log experienced that he said:

"We've sure done a heap of talking about whosoever we're goin' to bury or marry from this here Chapel, but at least there won't be no doubt in my own mind as to which one said the first prayer. Haven't become used to the muffled chugging of the motor lawn mower as yet, and several times today I have instinctively thought of the Bands as possibly being on the river, only to recall that it is nothing more than Clyde Claude Emmett Davis -- interruption..... A frolic at the henkey tonk seems to impell every one in the world to drop by this way to say Howdy on their way.

But there is no great loss of time without some considerable advantage, and my last caller was my second secretary with whom I ran over a bit of correspondence, and was altogether enchanted to discover a line skipped at an earlier reading, - to wit that life is coming my way, thanks to your generosity, and for ever and ever so long. How nice of life, - how infinitely nicer of you. And may I remark in passing how timely was a recent issue which I just got around to turn through last night just before falling asleep. It was the one containing the article and the grand pictures of the Mississippi River, up and down whose stream I seem to have been doing so much navigating of late with one James J. Audubon. And so the pleasures of study and the enjoyment of exploration by picture have again, as so often in the past, been united, thanks to your unfailing kindness to me. And at the close of this busy day how natural it is that I should return thanks to God for my Lady of the Lamp.....

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Sunday, March 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A fairly busy week end, and withal pleasant.

The nicest part of it was the Bands, -- Dr., Mrs. Horace and Paul King, - who came this afternoon. They didn't stay long but it was pleasant while it lasted. Dr. Rand is walking slowly with a cane. Mrs. Rand seemed much as usual in appearance but somehow seemed more tired than her patient. I guess the nurse, when connected by family ties, has a really harder time than the patient.

While we men sat on the gallery, Mrs. Rand strolled about the garden, collecting an elegant bouquet, and I never did get around to open the fine bottle of wine she brought me. But they will be back during the coming week or next week end, and I shall save it for then when I go to the camp to dine with them.

Saturday afternoon was a hurly-burly. Mrs. Holloman telephoned in the morning to ask if she might come by in the afternoon. She brought her 18 year old son with her, - a child weighing, I should guess, about 225 or 250, and inclined to go to sleep in his chair as soon as he sits down. I should be in a panic, if he were mine. Mrs. Wells also came along and Arthur LaSalle who was here last summer with his mother. The LaSalle's are the people who are restoring the old Brangier plantation, - the Hermitage, down on the Mississippi somewhere below Baton Rouge. Mrs. Holloman, to say something nice, confided to me on the telephone that Arthur LaSalle had asked if he might come to "alrose with the Hollomans, and had told her that on his first contact with me, "it was just like traveling 60 miles an hour when you suddenly strike a brick wall". I can't find much in that to preen my feather about, if I am consider myself likened to a brick wall, or a crash or whatever. But the LaSalle boy is alright and we had a pleasant chat. You can well imagine how much work could be accomplished in the hour they were here.

On the way out, Mrs. Holloman asked my opinion regarding the chance that she might be able to get up here one afternoon without easting about to find someone to accompany her. I told her that since she is "free, white and over 21", she ought to be able to make up her mind without any opinion from me, and that if she ever hoped to get any articles for the Picayune com-

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pleated (pleated), she had better begin making up her mind. Isn't it odd how people who feel social secure don't have to bother about dragons and duennas while people like her can raise such a question, as though anyone in Natchitoches Parish would know or care if she came alone or with a billion chaperons. After all, I am beginning to wonder what panic she may have stirred up in her own mind when, on occasion, she has arrived here to find some representative of the Natchitoches gentry present. How some bags seem to like to think up problems when none exist. Perhaps the fact that her present husband is old enough to be her grandfather may be an element in her quandary. Off hand, however, it seemed to me like a might foolish question.

It recalled to mind how the Madam used to laugh when someone from town once asked her if she wasn't worried about what people might say, knowing that Lyle lived at Melrose. She would then quote Lyle as Gospel:

"Listen, Aunt Cammie, if you can just get it established in people's minds once and for all that you are a little off, then you will never have to worry about how terrible anything you may do, for no matter what happens, people will always then pass it off with a mere remark: 'Well, you know, she always was just a little off'."

I had a few enclosures but don't seem to see them at the moment, but I think there was nothing of any particular interest. In Saturday's post came a letter from that shrewd number, saying she would be down on Thursday the 23rd in a station wagon to haul home plants. Thursday, from where I sit, sounds foolish at the moment.

This morning about 4:30 there was much flashing of lightning and banging away after the manner of some titanic alarm clock. A shower which the planters didn't want came cascading from on high. By 7 I could no longer resist the impulse to march up to Arenbourg to see how the hedge of privet was holding up, after the transplanting on Friday, knowing that no matter how it appeared, the shower to give it a lift. I was not particularly surprised, but none the less gratified that every leaf was as pert and green as though they had never been moved. As hedges go, it will never be too satisfactory in thickness, but nothing will ever beat it in ability to thrive.

I chatted with J. H. at the store for a few minutes on my return to Melrose, prior to breakfast. He flies to Washington tonight, and had planned returning tomorrow, but considered the possibility of staying over a few days. I hope I don't get any Postcards from Irma Tillinghast. Ezra and Log were among my visitors today and Ezra dictated the enclosed gingle. He didn't know the exact meaning of the one line, which I couldn't fathom either. Perhaps, after the St. Denis stuff, you can.....

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Monday, March 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I saw something pretty at Arenbourg early this morning, something, in fact, I had never seen before, --a baby armadillo, or however the animal spells his name.

To tell you the truth, until today, I never thought about what a baby armadillo might look like, and so my enchantment in finding out was perhaps the greater because I had never contemplated such a thing.

As I entered the side gate, I notice a couple of newly dug holes in the ground, their appearance suggesting the size a couple of broom handles, a foot apart, might have left, had they been driven into the ground 4 or 5 inches and then withdrawn. The petals from a red rose had fallen on the ground just beyond them, but on the opposite side of the hedge from me, but as the leaves were thin at the base, I was attracted to them, and bending over, started to put my hand through the hedge to gather them up, they were so pretty in their shimmering bath of dew, when my eyes caught sight of a full grown armadillo, -- obvious! a mother, assuming it is the mother that looks after the babies. She was a dull gray color, but then along side moved something about the size of a half grown rabbit, but as pink as a new boiled shrimp. On second glance, I noticed as it moved out from behind its parent that it was a replica in miniature, and my day was well begun. I have no doubt them must have seen me, but they are curious animal, frequently reacting not unlike a "possum" to surprises, and neither of them appeared alarmed or frightened. I had to take several steps to get around the corner of the hedge to see them without the intervening bushes, but when I reached the other side, they had both disappeared, and I made no effort to search for them. I don't care much to have them digging holes all over the place, but I guess Arenbourg can afford the hospitality to this mother and child, and so I hope they found a few fat grubs or whatever they eat for their morning repast.

I am enchanted to report that the always delicate white wisterias which I had planted with some misgivings at Arenbourg, are all looking as vigorous as can be, and are in flower at this comparatively early moment. I am keeping their tendrils cut back

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so that the concentration of energy will go into the roots and the stem, so that eventually the umbrella effect rather than the vine type will be the result. I don't much favor too many vines at Arenbourg, for in this rich soil, a vine of almost any variety is likely to "take the place" before one can catch up with it. Besides, in the case of the wisteria, the umbrella shaped arrangement seems to me particularly delightful as the best possible medium for displaying their drooping, honey sweet blossoms, draping the gray of the stem and the tender green foliage so delightfully.

What with other things to attend to, I have been neglecting to cultivate the mimosas this past season to any extent, but apparently at least two of them are almost beyond requiring any particular attention, for they are as sturdy as can be, and already are putting out young leaves. If the weather continues mild, I have no doubt they will be in flower rather earlier than usual this year. Once before I mentioned, I believe, how once in a while a mimosa starts heading off in some unpredictable direction with the ultimate of abandon, and such an one is behaving just that way at Yucca this year. It seems to have put its roots down under the Northeastern corner of Yucca, - slap under the Chapel, and has shot out a limb, or trunk or whatever the thing may be called, in an Easterly direction, perhaps to the extent of 14 or 20 feet, - in the general direction of the African House. I laugh every time I glance at the thing, it seems so ridiculous, heading off into space for no apparent reason, - on an angle - are beginning at the ground, of course, and curving so that the tip of the thing is perhaps 12 feet from the ground, - and not a single solitary twig or branch to do anything about its barrenness.

A couple of men at work in the gardens of Melrose, cutting out a heap of stuff, things originally planted in too close proximity, the one to the other, and now, after years of growth and a couple of years of neglect, so encroaching upon each other, as likely to ruin the chances of each other for ever producing anything like a satisfactory effect, - Rose of Sharon 15 feet in height with a 20 foot live oak growing slap in the middle of the same, crepe myrtles 18 feet high, pushing Chinese magnolias all out of joint. It's a consequence that one has to make up his mind as to which of two such impinging plants is to be nurtured and which disposed of, and while I can make such decisions with the greatest seeming nonchalance, still, inwardly, there is always a twinge when I have to turn thumbs down on either the one or the other.

Mr. J. M. J. telephoned this afternoon. He said he flew to New Orleans to Washington in three and a half hours, which seems like fast flying for mere commercial travel, but I am sure he must find such speed ever so satisfying.

Had in mind to touch of literary points, but got bogged down in horticultural. Perhaps I shall do better on the morrow...

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Tuesday, March 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another beautiful busy Spring day, and except for one guest for mid day dinner, no pilgrims, by some miracle or other.

Now that the dawn arrives a little earlier than a month ago, I seem to be getting in more work at Arenbourg before breaking fast, and that lends both appetite and satisfaction.

Celeste dropped by after 9 o'clock coffee to assist me in taking the measurements for the Lowells that will cut the direct daylight from each side of the stained glass, - a height of "2 yards and 33 inches", as Pury figured it the other day. I gave Celeste the "owells and she took them home to Madam Regard who wants to make them for me. Poor Madam Regard, she is going to be so disappointed when she finally learns the Chapel is to St. Martin de Porres and not of Tours.

Clemence had passed this way before I had returned from the Post Office and had set up her "baptism" scene in the Chapel before I arrived. It's a typical Clemence, not in one of her more florid moods, but gay enough, with perhaps 20 people or more in the rural festivities, a preacher ringing the bell, converts in their white robes, a couple actually in the water, and the Church in the background decidedly going down hill. Primitive it is and decidedly negroid pictorially, and so I think it will due very nicely for the department for which it was stirred up.

I am rather curious to know how she toated the thing the miles between her cabin and Yucca, for the oil is still fresh, and I have it flat on the floor tonight, hoping it may eventually dry. As it is approximately 20 by 30 inches, and what with a 25 mile breeze afloat this morning, I can't imagine how the artist got it that far without having preacher, congregation and converts all one great big smudge.

I chatted with her for a few minutes but couldn't linger long as I had some gardeners who needed a bit of supervision at the time. Clemence said she would be coming back to see me in a few days and would then tell me the identity of the several characters in the piece. I have already recognized a couple of them, but shall want all the details in her inimitable delivery.

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I am approaching the end of Audubon's America, and shall be depressed when I shall have finished it, --it is so interesting. At the moment I am with him up the Missouri river, and much of this section is given directly from his Journal of the trip. I know not if only sections of the Journal are included in the present book or if Audubon himself skipped a few days now and then in his entries. There is much talk about Mr. Harris, but unfortunately the Journal as quoted skips from July 1st to July 7th, - or thereabouts, so that July 4th and 5th, - the dates mentioned in his script on Mary's head of the doe, are omitted. His impressions of the Indians is very unfavorable. He is passing through the same country and meeting with the same tribes that Lewis and Clark mentioned so frequently, and also rather unfavorably, too when they were making the same up-stream journey 40 years earlier. How much the manners, customs and social aspects of the tribes had altered in those 40 years, I wouldn't know, although an Editor's note indicates that in 1837 from 50,000 to 150,000 of them were carried off by smallpox, reducing one tribe, at least, to only 25 members surviving the scourge.

There is an interesting chapter, too, on Mr. Audubon's visit to several New England cities after fame had become his, and fortune was smiling in his direction. His contact with Daniel Webster was chiefly interesting because Mr. Webster had never paid him anything on the Elephant Edition, to which he had subscribed years before, but blandly subscribed to the smaller edition with the bird biographies, - the big plates costing a thousand dollars for the original subscription, and the smaller edition \$120.00. Webster, as I learned from the biography of Andrew Jackson, read some months back, was always behind in his debt payments, and this in spite of the fact that he was the dominant Republican figure for a number of years, and while holding his Senator's seat made no bones about calling the attention of the Bank of the U. S., - controlled by old Nicholas Biddle, that his retainer's fee from that institution was due. Surely modern ethics would frown on a Senator accepting annual retainer's fee from an institution holding a monopoly on the banking business of the nation, especially when its charter for renewal was coming up, but that didn't seem to enter in to Mr. Webster's calculations in the slightest, but it probably in a large measure explains his opposition to Jackson in his fight against the Biddle outfit.

Come to think of it, I find that every once in a while I like some book with inordinate delight because mentally I find it placed in the catalogue of "must volumes" for eventual re-reading and sharing on the gallery at Arenbourg. Don't you think so.....

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Wednesday, March 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another splendid Spring day, a fairly heavy frost last night and a tempering breeze today that kept the thermometer around 72.

It seems to me it is time for the swarms of black birds to be descending upon us, but they haven't appeared as yet. But the red winged black birds are here, and busy as bees, fixing to set up housekeeping, I guess. A half dozen of them along the margin of the river at Arenbourg this morning kept buzzing about my spade, looking for some early worms, I reckon. I like their songs, especially the one that suggests Pan sounding a single note on his reed.

And speaking of wood wind instruments, I must remark upon just that in its natural state which I have heard several days during the past week. Occasionally some of the school children can't resist trying to get themselves a fishing pole from the bamboo headage behind the "sun clock", and although they usually fail, they do succeed in breaking off a stalk now and then. When this dries, the tattered end being sometimes from 4 to 8 feet from the ground, a weird and rather pleasant note is struck when the winds pass through. Of late there has been a 25 mile wind out of the North and the resulting sounds from the hedge, varying, I suppose, by the size and amount of splinters in each broken staff, brings forth a variety of notes that is delightful. On Monday a couple of mocking birds, apparently entranced at the music, succeeded in getting themselves all tangled up in attempting to imitate several of the notes all at the same time. Not to be out-done by the mocking birds, some rancorous blue jays joined in the feathered hubbub and some black birds, - the red wing breed, were ever so busy, but quite independently, in voicing their usual program. The whole thing was gay, and particularly when a sudden gust of wind would increase the volume and possibly altered the scale a bit, for automatically the mocking birds and the blue jay would attempt to adjust their chorus to suit the new key, with results that were both charming and hilarious.

This noon I took time out to jam Clemence's "Baptisin'" into a white frame and hang the thing in the Chapel. It

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seems to strike just the right note, a sort of comic relief to the surrounding austerity, - the crude benches, the beauty of the stained glass, the nobleness of the fluted column, standing in one corner for the Greek philosophers, the somewhat imposing white Cross for Christ in the other, - with mud walls surrounding the whole save where the trim stationary blinds to the East and North let in a filtered light without permitting the vision to be distracted by whatever grows in the gardens beyond.

What convinced me that the Cane River primitive had touched just the proper note was the reaction manifested by some of my untutored negro friends who passed this way for a Howdy on their way to the honkey tonk at first dark. To these like Peter who never heard of "the glory that was Greece", let alone the meaning of the word philosopher, the picture was the thing.

"Hah - hah!" in quick succession, a suggestion of gaiety, mingled with surprise. "You know, Clemence, she done hit that one jus' right. That's a sure 'nough baptisin' alright, and Lord! look at this here one here, sure is Ezra's mama if it's anybody, getting there late for the doin's, the last one to get in the picture, and you can see she already a-fussin' 'cause they got things rigged up without waitin' for her to say how it ought to be a-doin'."

Obviously during the past 500 years there has been something lacking in most Churches, but now that we have a Cross for the religious minded, a Greek pillar for the intellectual and a picture for the simple souls, perhaps St. Martin's Chapel will help bridge a gap that will at least offer something to a little wider, even though more limited circle, if you will pardon the paradox.

I had a couple of gardeners going full tilt at Melrose all day. They worked very hard, and really what with the mechanical lawn mower thrown in, the place does appear to be a little more in order. Sam Peace who has enough Indian blood in him to make him as taciturn as a toad came up to me in the gardens this evening to remark that in his opinion the place hadn't looked so revived in years. Rain is predicted for this week end, and dampness with heat will induce a tropical surge that will take some scrambling to keep up with, but if some semblance of order has been established in a haphazard sort of way, then the on-rush will be the easier to control or at least to contend with.

Much gaming at cards across the fence all afternoon with a fancy supper at the end of the thing, I suppose. I was kindly invited to break bread with the guests but declined. After all, I'm already having fun.....

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Thursday, March 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum: A Grand Day, - thanks to a billion circumstances, all centering around the primary one, - your elegant letter of Saturday last past.

I have read it but once, but shall read and re-read it between now and the week end, - what with so many cardinal points it covers and in a fashion that completely delights me.

First off, may I pin no end of laurel leaves about your person for all the grand research accomplished in my behalf and passed along in such delectable style.

It goes without saying I am tremendously interested in all that you tracked down about the Black Swan and the genealogy of the St. Dennis family. I shall have occasion to refer to it often at subsequent sittings and I shall always feel indebted to you for the whole range of flood lights of information you have turned on these fascinating points for our mutual understanding of this all but forgotten history. When I stop to think of the 20 years Lyle spent in this Parish and the flight through the records of one A. Kane, both of them passing themselves off for writing Louisiana history, and neither of them ever touching upon the kernel of truth which you in such a removed locality have brought forth, - well, I am consumed with admiration and gratitude.

And how nice to know, even though so much of it was devoted to me, that the past week end could be spent, not in chasing to the ends of the earth, but rather in delving into matters that hold so much for the more perfect understanding of the region that is likely to always mean something very special to us. Let us hope for more frequent and more prolonged week ends of that particular stamp.

Various demands on my time today prevented me from reading your letter without interruption at a single sitting, and I want to run through it again and again before I touch on some of the historical points. I do want to thank you for having acquainted me with doings at Hyde Park on the 17th, which somehow I had missed if they did get reported on the air. And I am glad the lady is sitting for her portrait, and what a gracious way she expressed her approval of the artist's efforts. What a perfect combination, a report of her doings through the pen of Lydia Lee of Lyme.

I notice I keep backing up to re-strike letters in this Memo, so if it appears more difficult to read than usual, just charge it

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off to the lateness of the hour, for I am writing a little later than usual, and to the fact that I have a thorn in each thumb and a cut on the end of my index finger which tends to make me pick around with more delicacy than

I had a couple of carpenters at and around Yucca all day, piddling while I wasn't present, which was about all the time. I spent the greater part of my day at Arenbourg, and feeling good and tired tonight as a result, -- the goodness of satisfaction in having done a heap of things I wanted to do, such as trimming hedges, stirring up ground around the little crepe myrtles planted about the elephant traps, discovering a couple of grand oaks that had grown up in Unit No. 1 without my notice, -- not too far up, but with a trunk as big around, I guess, as a silver dollar, while those on the terrace which are just where I want them are thriving alright, but expanding their hip line not at all, it seems to me. I had Andy helping all day, and when we were finished, and had done little more than clear out a tenth section of the Unit lost in last year's weeds, I felt more or less satisfied because the stuff that continues growing, sheltered from the average eye by clumps of weeds intentionally left standing, it appears with the cutting of some of these weeds that some of the things I had envisioned are really taking shape, and so many things are looking so well, that the effort seems all the more heartening. I might say in passing that the mimosas are putting out leaves and all 4 of them are looking as sturdy as can be.

On the home front things seem to be going alright. J. H. returned from Washington at midnight and so I saw him this morning. I am always glad when he is about for although I never see him much, the momentary contact is pleasant. At Coffee Celeste told me that at her party yesterday she heard I was having my portrait painted. I told her I was glad to hear that and if she could get me any additional particulars as to what progress is being made, I should be entranced to find out. I shall find some good excuse to call up Rosalyn one of these days, and perhaps I may then find out for myself.

We were not honored by any visitors from Shreveport today. Perhaps the morrow may bring them forth, perhaps it may be July before the pleasure isn't ours. I suspect, however, it will be soon, for while she talks about taking home banana plants, what she is really coming for it to raid the iris garden. She taught me a trick a few years ago when she wanted to be particular mean to one of her mother's friends, -- to wit, by cutting off the single blossom any plant produces, no one for the balance of the season may tell where such a type may be located. She really had something there.

With your grand Saturday letter reaching me today, and figuring parcel post might take a couple of days longer, it seemed but logical that I should forward a little package to you in today's out-going post. Forgive me if its advent is premature. And again my thanks for having made my day so very happy.....

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Friday, March 24th, 1950

Memorandum:

Spring seems to have moved on, --Northward, --and full Summer spreads over the bows and bends of Cane River.

I had a grand time at Arenbourg this morning, but I can't seem to remember exactly what in particular enchanted me, there have been so many hours and pilgrims between me and morning. Perhaps it was no more than to see the tender sprays on the white wisteria plants or the milk and wine lilies blooming in the rank grass. I do know I dallied long, not getting back to Yucca until 9, and feeling as fit as a fiddle after a hot-cold bath and a round of coffee, strong enough to curl one's perruque.

By some Law of compensation, I enjoyed both the worst type and the best of pilgrims today, and as the worst came first and the best last, the day finished quite satisfactory. The nice people were from Northwest Louisiana, or rather Northeast, -- the Mississippi River parishes, while the worst was with 4 or 5 people from Shreveport, brought here by Madame Cloutier of Beaufort. Curiously enough, and yet perhaps by some unfailing genealogical twist, the real bag of the party was a Mrs. Somebody or other, born Cora Lee Henry, and cousin of the local breed. I never laid eyes on her before but had heard the Madam refer to her as a bag and I recall how she put her foot down one day when Sister manifested great love for her, and the Madam thundered, "but never with she come here."

Well, she came today, and seemed civilized when I was presented, but she managed to get off at a left foot start, and maintained it to the point of getting into the car before the others did, without bothering to say Goodbye to me, or even "Go to Hell."

Celeste, whom they had dropped in to see for a moment, spoke of the Chapel, and there was much talk about it in advance. As we approached the big house, after leaving Celeste's, Cora Lee suddenly bolted from the group and galloping down a path, suddenly lifted up a foot and kicked poor old Grandpa, not so well at the moment, who was flattened out on his side in the sunshine. He jumped up thunderstruck, not even running away, not being accustomed to such unprovoked attacks.

"I just can't stand the sight of a cat or a dog," she explained. "Horses I love, but just to see one of those things sitting on somebody's lap simply drives me crazy."

I elevated an eyebrow and said I love to see a mare being fondled

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in such a fashion. She said she didn't understand me. I didn't bother to explain.

At my house, she wanted to know who the lady was with the black duck in the corner of the picture. I told her it was the first American opera singer, Eliza Greenfield.

"What nigger told you that," she inquired. "You can tell that to the other, some of whom are from Illinois, but you can't sell that sort of stuff to me, a Southerner."

Inquiry was made about when they would be shown the Chapel. I said they wouldn't be. And, after the usual amenities on the part of the others, that tour was finished.

So it goes, requiring all sorts of people to make a world, but a single type to terminate a tour with dispatch.

In your last letter, you inquired regarding the birth year of Augustin and Suzanne Metoyer. It was 1768 (one seven six eight). Their mama's emancipation had been precisely ten years earlier.

And speaking of Suzanne impels me to speak of the item going forward to you in yesterday's post. The original etching in the black frame, while alright of an interesting bit of architecture, the frame is an original ante bellum item, having once belonged to Suzanne. I thought you might like it both for that reason and because it might suit some Audubon or other print of appropriate size, should you ever have occasion to hang it.

The larger book with pictures, clippings and notations in a feminine hand readily recognizable, was presented to me a number of years ago. I thought you might like it for itself and its contents and the flavor of the type of thing, as contrived by a mutual friend.

And as regards the Chase item, might I warn you and recommend something at the same time. It is duller than dull in its greatest bulk, but after the first few hours of boredom, should you get that far, I think you may find it convenient to keep a pencil in hand to mark the sections, outside the dry, religious sections which, if properly cut and pasted, together, might make a fascinating story, when appropriately annotated. I have included the History of Oakland College, included in the same diary, and thought it might eventually be called to the attention and printed by the Mississippi Historical Society, were I in a situation to dictate an introduction about Dr. Chase. In the event the Chase diary or memoir is too dry, don't attempt wading through it this year or next, but sometime when you have oceans of time for such headaches. If any page is missing, I may be able to supply it, as I have the other copy bound in book form for later consultation, together with a couple of personal accounts of visits to Nantua before it vanished from the market. My thoughts will

And may your birthday be ever so happy. A day my thoughts will center so steadfastly in one particular direction....

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Sunday, March 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Whenever anything, no matter how vaguely tinged with Religion, becomes controversial, a measure of success is guaranteed. Our little Chapel accordingly is on the way to success.

About 8 o'clock last night Puny tapped on my window. He said he had something confidential to tell me. Mrs. Rand and some ladies were at the camp Saturday afternoon. Puny remarked to her that he knew I would be glad to see that she got up. She told him she wasn't coming by, she was so upset about the Chapel. "So Catholic that the Cross is big enough to hang you and Mrs. Francois at the same time". She told Puny it was something neither Miss Cammie nor I would have contrived. She didn't know anything about the Grecian column or the painting of the Baptist baptisin', for all she could remember was the huge Catholic cross.

Poor Madam Rand, her long months of worry has been to wearing.

I promised Puny I wouldn't breathe a word that he had confided in me.

This morning about 10, Horace and Ed Rand passed this way. They particularly asked to see the Chapel. I gather they must have heard the thing discussed. I showed it to them. They were delighted and urged me never to let anyone discourage me from maintaining the thing. I thought that nice of them. They brought an invitation from their mother to come over for dinner at the camp. I thought that nice, too.

As I was walking with them to the side gate, we met J. H. and Celeste who were touring Dr. and Mrs. Mays and Dr. and Mrs. Smith, one, Scott or some such) all of Shreveport, Dr. Mays being President of the Camelia Society at the moment. We all chatted for a few moments, and while the Rand boys and the ladies and I were chatting under the fig tree, J. H. lifted the two doctors to the African House, and on leaving called to me to say he was going to show the doctors the new Chapel. J. H. is a sight, for he himself had never seen the thing, and I wonder he knew where it was situated so slightly. It does seem to head Celeste's chatter.

I dined with J. H. and Celeste and then went to the Rands for coffee, but they had waited dinner for me, and I did pretty well by myself on the second go-round. The wind was so high, we dined inside in groups of four. I sat with Dr. Rand, Banker Bolton and wife of Alexandria.

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Mrs. Rand remarked the boys had seen the Chapel during their visit in the morning. I told her I was so glad, for as she had probably heard, I was throwing all the contents of the place into the byou and returning the assortment of cast off trash that had formerly occupied the place. She seemed astonished. I coupled the first declaration by a second, that I was taking out all the plumbing fixtures at Yucca and having all the electricity removed, making preparations to run my radio, reading machine, etc., by candle power, in order that things here would be just as they had been in ante bellum times. With that, poor, tired lady, I think she began to see the light, for she hazarded the thought that she might eventually bring herself around, alt ough she knew that Miss Cammie and Lyle never liked Catholics and could never have stood for a Cross. I recalled to her mind the friendship Mrs. Enry had for a quarter of a century with Father Baumgartner, the local priest, her care and daily visits for 50 years to Mrs. Aubin-Roque, Celine, etc., and asked herself if she had so soon forgotten Mr. Bachellier, and asked her if she recalled Lyle friend, the priest, to whom he rented his apartment in "adison Street in New Orleans, etc., etc. and ended up by pointing out that it was the Catholic, Baptist or Alberta bigotry that the Adam and Lyle resented and that neither of them cared a hoot to what faith anybody subscribed.

She then confessed that she had felt the impulse to help me with anything she could and that had I only planned a little theatre on my back gallery, she would have done something about seeing I had movies projected. "A movie projector for me....h m m m." Before she gets through with it, I can see easily enough that Adam Rand will be providing me with candles for the altar piece and liking it, and them.

I was enchanted to find Dr. Rand seemed so much better, physically and in spirit, and that Madam Rand was obviously on the mend in the latter department. Under the circumstances, it seemed to me just as well not to mention a card I had received yesterday from the Agent of the Texas and Pacific, advising me that a 240 pound colored Sait was spending the week end in the freight office of the Railroad at Derry, La. A fine place for a Saint of such tonnage to be spending his week end, you will agree. First a Cross, then a Saint, and if poor Adam Rand knew about the latter, I suppose she would be having nightmares tonight in which the Pope would be viewing the baptisin' mural in the Yucca Chapel and pinning a holy metal on one of the Clemence Hunters.

But enough--did you say too much, of such temfeclery. On Saturday the postman ran ahead of schedule and instead of sending my mail in to town by a Henry to be posted, I held out Friday's Memo and shall send it by air on the morrow. I so hope it reaches you on your natal day, and that the latter may be the nicest ever, as it will be for me as telepathetically I share it with you....

I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Rand and Celeste and then went to the Rand's for coffee, but they had waited dinner for me, and I did pretty well by myself on the second round. The wind was so high, we dined inside in groups of four. I sat with Dr. Rand, Barker Bolton and wife of Alexandria.

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Monday, March 27th, 1950.

Memroandum:

Between 2 and 4 this morning we had such an elegant shower, I am bound to remark upon it. All day Sunday the wind blew mightily from the South, and the ground, already dry, was almost parched when night came on and the breeze slackened. Then came the rain, but with dawn, the wind returned, and so, what with a brilliant sun accompanying it today, I suppose we are almost as dry again tonight as we were 24 hours ago.

As a consequence of the dampness, the tractors and tractor drivers remained idle today, and so the Dark Duke and Peter passed this way about 7 o'clock this morning, asking if they might go to Derry to pick up the Saint. They could, and after their return, I left it to them to open the box which looked forever like a coffin, and to unpack the likeness, albeit a little small, - 4 or 5 feet in height, of the Blessed Martin, and set the thing up in the Chapel.

Thinking they had completed the job I had in mind to join them on the back gallery when I heard Peter say:

"No, Lord, I ain't goin' to tear off that paper to see if he's really inside it. What if he move. Besides, Log, what if we do get off the wrappin's and you try to pick him up off the ground and he slip one of them Saint arms around you neck and chokes you."

And so I thought it better to letter the brothers Baptiste solve their own problem, they seemed to be having so much half serious, half pseudo voodoo about the business.

Half an hour later I put in an appearance, and everything was in order. Log expalined:

"You see, we was a little touchy about bringin' forth the Saint-until we done seen him good, but after that, we was sure he was jus' another Baptiste, and now I what's married with two boys of my own, I claims him as my own, while Peter what ain't married, he allows as how he is his sure enough....."

interruption, --Mr. Brew passes bye, and after reading the enclosure, I accompany him through the garden on his way out, and the moon is marvelous.

.....

It isn't important, but quite revealing, in view of all the talk that has gone before, that one Postell, in lines not identical but certainly parallel to those taken by others, sees nothing in common, except the negro characters, in the statue and the mural. I shall write him a note tonight, recalling that there is another common denominator. - God.

For all I know, perhaps Catholics and Protestants don't like to be reminded that there is just a chance that the God of each is the same but if the Chapel does little more than to make such an idea dawn in some tight knit brain, it will well have been worth while.

While I have it in mind, let me respond to your recent inquiry regarding the present status of the remarkable persimmon, some of whose twigs have been grafted on the Arenbourg-orientals. Up to the present moment, no classification or name has been assigned to this particular strain. From one quarter comes word that the item in question is merely a variation of an early American (native) fruit. From another authority I learn that the native American was never of such imposing girth as is the Arenbourg kind. Up to now, that is where the matter stands, and I am expecting a clarification of the matter shortly, and should it fail to come to hand before the end of the ensuing month, I shall stir the embers a bit and get the heat going so that the whole thing may be brought to a boiling point before agriculturalist generally have become lost in the great out-of-doors as full summer sweeps across the various educational and Governmental havens harboring such gentry during the Winter time.

A strange and quite hideous contraption has suddenly come into being on Alphonse's property, immediately adjoining Arenbourg. Somebody had a wonderful idea to contrive a baseball park beginning at the honkey-tonk, running to the Alphonse gate and thence back to Uncle d'r's. An 8 foot fence of planks, one joining the next, has risen like an ancient stockade. I sent out word that if and when a baseball flew over the fence, it was to remain where it fell and no one was to search for it under any circumstances. A chicken wire netting has now been rigged up atop the 8 foot planks, and yesterday's wind made the whole business sag to precariously that it had to be propped up all over again today. The thing will last for about 4 months, - if the wind doesn't blow too hard, and after that the baseball park will have been forgotten and the fence used for kindling. In the mean time, I like its presence, for it makes an impenetrable screen and so long as it stands, it will give the new hedge along that line an opportunity to do a bit of climbing before the fence itself collapses.

The error in reasoning by Alphonse and his son is to be found in the fact that nearly everyone of the potential customers of Sunday, spends all his money on Saturday night, and if two bits be left on Sunday, when the games are played, the money will go not for admissions to a funny ball bark but for more of the same fire water that made things hum on Saturday night.....

Tuesday, March 28th, 1950.
 The band's sound of heart and his delight increased, explaining his excitement over the latter by the remark that "when good people we like seem heavy hearted about something as we all see, it looks like we've heart gets wearisome, too, even if we ain't really so different from the others."

Memorandum:

Another summer's day with the thermometer in the 80's, in spite of the continuing high wind which carries dust from the Southwest in quantities that dims the billiance of the sun. I can vaguely but definitely imagine what it must be like on the Great Plains.

I don't recall such an unceasing breeze over such a long period. J. A. tells me that the heavy rain we had early Monday morning has so dried up that ploughing is made difficult by the hardness of the soil, and much of what is ploughed instantly takes to the skies.

Mrs. Rand came by this morning, accompanied by B. Randolph. While I was giving a few final pointers to the gardeners, they walked around a bit, and before leaving, asked me to have coffee at the camp with them at 1 o'clock. I accepted. I assume they must have visited the Chapel for the lady demonstrated her ability to exercise a woman's right by obviously changing her mind to the point that she now is in love with the Chapel and asks me if I mind if she casts about to find a little organ for it. Naturally I am all in favor of that, and so the Yucca section housing St. Martin moves out from its temporary shadow.

Other visitors today included Clemence. She was fixing to go to Alexandria where her sister lives. She told me she had just learned that her sister's daughter and husband had had a disagreement and that the husband "had stabbed her to death over the heart with a big old knife". I inquired as to the probable date of the funeral. Casually she explained that she didn't think there would be any, for "although he stabbed her to death over the heart, the doctor say my sister's girl ain't goin' to die and so I'm a-fixin' to go down and see how she's a-makin' it."

Alright, Clemence, and went Dora love that one.

Along about first dark tonight, Puny tapped on my window. He said he had heard through Peter and Log that something had happened yesterday, and so, after his day of work on Red River pecan groves, he had come by "to see the boy". For a second it didn't occur to me what he was driving at, and then I remembered how the brothers Baptiste had referred to the statue. And so Puny saw it, half by match light and half by moon.

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and exuded delight in the same childlike manner that invariably moves the untutored negro of his type. I told him of Mrs. Rand's change of heart and his delight increased, explaining his enchantment over the latter by the remark that "when good people we likes seem heavy hearted about something us-es likes, it looks like us-es heart gets wearisome, too, even if we ain't feelin' no different about how we felt before".

And then came my secretary, feeling a little below par, having just sliced off the end of a finger while fiddling with the engine of his tractor. And so we read no mail tonight, and there wasn't so much to explore anyway, for it seemed to me Puny's entertaining chatter with Mr. Brew would do the latter more good than the patient having to do the talking. I gave them a glass of wine and they went their separate ways, Mr. Brew taking an anti-pain pill and a mild sleeping potion along with him, guaranteeing him a night's sleep regardless.

I am in the doldrums of things to read at the moment. The "50 Great American's" progresses but without much inspiration, although I have learned a couple of things I didn't know about one or two people, such as the fact that in his youth, Robert Fulton was a portrait painter and did a miniature of Benjamin Franklin. The enclosure is of scant interest, but I send it along regardless. The reference to Clemence has to do with a message passed along on Clemence's behalf the other day, wherein little G. Hunter said she would like to "mark off a picture for Miss R.'s bathroom". Just what Clemence could have had in mind, no one but she has the slightest notion, but I thought Robina would appreciate the direct quote, as apparently she did.

One more note on somewhat odd reporting of the local health situation and I must fold. Andy was helping me at Arenbourg today. He spoke of Aurellia having to take their Mama to the hospital in Alexandria. He said his Mama had been pretty thin of late and last evening she had had, not one stroke but five, five in a row. And so they called a doctor and she was feeling better, and they helped her walk to the car, and that the hospital called this afternoon to report she was doing fine and would be back home in a few days. I chanced to see Dr. Yaeger later in the day and he mentioned the case as one of mal-nutrition, and said the lady had fainted 4 or 5 times but responded readily to a restorative. So far as I can recall, this makes today outstanding, one lady with five strokes in as many minutes and another lady stabbed to death over the heart, and both of them giving every indication of an immediate return to normal activity.

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Wednesday, March 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another lovely summer's day except for the high winds which have shifted to the North and less dust seems to permeate everything.

I like the fair weather, it gives me so many opportunities to undertake so many things outside. But the fine weather does have the draw-back of making it pleasant for road-runners to run, and too many of them are heading in this direction.

One batch this morning, however, proved to be the exception to the rule. It was perhaps 10:15 when I was making a quick look-see at what the gardeners were up to when I encountered 4 people who appeared quite civilized. Unfortunately the first man got things vaguely off on the wrong foot by saying he was acquainted with "Arnett Lane" and wondered if he might be speaking with Mr. Mignon. I winced but admitted all.

He said his name was Stearn, and he presented his associates, two other gentlemen, and they were as well as Mr. Stearn, and a charming woman who, to me, looked precisely like pictures we have all seen of Amelia Earhart. She was delightful, too.

I gave them a quick look at the outside of the Weaving House and the Bindery, an inside glance at the Studio and a fairly thorough once-over, inside and out of the African House and a brief look at my living room, the gallery on the White Garden side and the Chapel. I asked if anyone knew what time it might be. 11:35. I lied and said I had an appointment at 11:30 and that the tour was over, without ever giving them a glance at the big house. They seemed ever so appreciative. On the way to the front gate, Mr. Stearn sighed and said he only regretted he couldn't wrap up the African House and the Chapel and take it with him. Naturally I liked that.

And when saying Goodbye, he asked if sometime he might bring "my wife, who is so interested in old homes". I told him to do so by all means and that we could have little Miss Dormon here or not, as the wife pleased.

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Stearn

I threw little Miss Dornon in just on a chance, and to find out if Mr. Stearn was the Mr. Stearn I thought he might be. He said: "Oh, you know Mrs. Dornon, of course....she was so kind as to give my wife the set of drawings she did for her Louisiana Wildflower book. It was indeed then Edgar B. Stearn, and it was "my wife" who has kept the Dornons on an annuity for heaven alone knows how long. But I let the comparative incognito of simple Mr. Stearn remain complete. He said that he had had an opportunity to see quite a few old Louisiana homes but the flavor of none of them could compare with Melrose. I am glad he liked it and I am glad I sent them all away while there still remained much for them to want to see, for their next visit will hold other "tresors" to view for the first time as well as older ones for them to enjoy again.

And so I directed them to Natchitoches via the Joyeous Coast, for all had read about The Journal of the Young Man of Fashion in Lyle's opus and were entranced at the prospect of treading that soil.

Rosedown

When the Stearns tried to preserve Rosedown, I imagine they may have burshed against much of the Audubon lore in that region, and I think I shall inquire from Mr. Stearn when I drop him a line if he can tell us anything about one Joseph Mason who seems to have been to Audubon's painting what Mozart was to European music when both children were in their tender teens.

While I think of it, I must tell you one thing Mr. Stearn said that I thought amusing. He was so delighted with the simple curdness of the Chapel that he expressed the opinion that everybody seeing it would be equally entranced. I told him that he was quite wrong and that the Baptists were denouncing me for having a Cross and a Saint in the place while the Catholics were fussing because I had the baptisin' mural on the wall. I said: "Of course, I really don't mind, since Will Percy was perfectly right in saying that only the aristocrats and the negroes matter in the South, and both these brackets of society seem to like the place. But I must admit I find it odd to be damned from two sides by the Catholics and the Protestants alike."

Said Mr. Stearn:

"I'll throw in another damn, - both for sincerity's sake and for good measure. I don't care who damns you for your undertaking. - I think it's a damned good idea."

Well, so much for one set of pilgrims, and the other sets passing this way don't matter. From where I sit, I am a little astonished that I did any gardening today, but I did get a few things done, and now forthwith I fold....

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Thursday, March 30th, 1950.
Memorandum: Thirty million adjustments would be insufficient to get me straightened around so that I might properly judge if it is in reality your birthday or that of Arenbourg's and mine.

I awoke to a marvelous day and everything went along swammingly until the post arrived, bringing me not only all kinds of lovely surprises via the Easter Bunny, but also a fat envelope containing printed material of surpassing delight and best of all, an elegant letter. And all in one post.

My first impulse at dawn was to hope that your day might be ever and ever so happy, but by the time 9 o'clock and the post had arrived, I knew full well it couldn't possibly be half so nice as mine.

Frankly, I hadn't contemplated concentrating on Arenbourg tomorrow, except by myself, but what with a birthday to be considered, I shall ask assistance so that preparations for the on-rush of Spring may be that much better effected. Arenbourg says its thanks, - and may I add mine.

And speaking of Arenbourg, the pictures are marvelously clear of little king, the mandina hedge and the mimosa, - not to mention the weeds. I am entranced to have them, and eventually when turning through my scrapbook, I shall be encountering them an one Lydia Lee of Lyle, with each turning of the pages.

As between this paragraph and the one immediately above, I have taken a little turn in the moonlight. With one of the elegantly wrapped cadies or two in my pocket, and inhaling a Koel, I betook myself to the terrace to see what best might be on the docket bright and early tomorrow morning. I stopped at the honkey-tonk to see if one of our Ethopian assistant might be at this "poor man's club", and Lo! I was successful in making arrangements for companions at gardening on the morrow.

I haven't as yet had an opportunity to read all the printed material, which, of course, guarantees me infinite pleasure at each subsequent sitting. I did, however, read a portion of the article about the New Orleans Catholics of color, and find it ever so informative. I shall not take up the date of 1699 as the founding of the Crescent City, for although

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that seems to be pushing it back a few years further than I had supposed, it isn't of the slightest importance, for the main thing in the particulars it gives covering the efforts of one branch of religion to do something positive about the racial business, or to consider it a thing about which too much has already been done. I shall read further and speak further on this subject. The van Gogh item, from the Metropolitan, is a gem, of course, and I am going to run through it billions of times. And now nice of you to enclose the lovely cards, both so splendid and both so individually distinctive of their own particular mode and manner.

I hope you were able to snatch a glance of green in the Botanical Gardens on Saturday. But even though the color be laggardly in putting in an appearance, the open air and promise of spring in the offing would make the outing worth while.

And let me say how much I appreciate the news items, the Tilloah encounter and doings in his department of grandchildren and expectant grandchildren. Wasn't that a coincidence that you should have bumped into him slap at the time your hands were heavily laden with items bearing an address that had he seen it, would have set him into fits of curiosity.

The Willie episode or latest trend is discouraging. Poor L. J. Why, I wonder, must she bear such heavy crosses. Sometimes, since reading your account of the latest wrinkle from Binghamton, if it wouldn't be the kindest thing all the way around for her or some member of her family to advise the Veteran's Bureau of his apparent instability mentally. Naturally nothing would be mentioned regarding the aftermath of the Long Island business, but merely a statement as to his prolonged silences, his apparent absence of adequate sense of orientation to civilian life, etc., etc. It is my understanding that the Veteran's Bureau provides marvelous care of the mal-adjusted of the post war period, discharged veterans, etc. Assuming it is possible to bring a mind back into balance, how wonderful it would be if treatment under Government experts could effect such a thing. I have no doubt such a course and a hundred others have been considered, and each probably has some draw-back about it. If by treatment, however, the patient could be restored to normality, how marvelous it would be that a potentially good life might be saved; and if it should turn out that it is beyond saving, then better it is that the attention of the authorities be called to the situation, in order that such a heavy burden as the possibility of him breaking out into some violence, might be lifted.

And so sunshine and shadow inter-ply, but I hope your day has been all sunshine and ocens of it. Mine has, thanks to just one L. J. and how Good is God to have created such a lovely lady with a lamp. I have the feeling that the world is a better place for her.

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Friday, March 31st, 1950.

Memorandum:

What an elegant message, penned on the 29th, on what an elegant piece of stationery, bearing the likeness of my favorite New England Church at Old Lyme. Really, little Miss Lydia Lee is something.

I am glad the "coli" came through safely and that the air mail, suggesting you hold a red pencil in your hand, brandishing it madly, when wading through the manuscript of B. Chase of Mantua.

As for Grandpere's greeting, he did not pose for his likeness. The little old magnolia on which he is standing I have left in its somewhat decrepit state merely because when I am returning from Arenbourg, good old Grandpa is usually waiting for me, and as I approach, he hops up on the twisted trunk of the tree, sticking out his neck in hopes that I may give him a couple of tugs at the ear. Usually he doesn't hop in vain. And while Carolyn and Helen were taking pictures of the sun dial, Grandpa hopped up in his usual place and he and I went through our accustomed ritual without realizing until later that somehow or other we got in the way of Helen's camera.

An endless telephone message from la Holloman to say she had just heard from the Picayune and asking if she could come up for dictation shortly. Mr. Ogden, the Editor of the Magazine Section, feels the story of the Black Swan merits an article all by itself which comes as a complete surprise, since the Picayune is so notoriously frightened of the word color. But of course I am all in favor of expanding the material covering the Greenfield lady, for as composed originally, it was but a 5th part of a single article, stemming from the D. A. R. survey, which had been pushed in rather quietly, with the realization that probably even that little bit would be rejected. But now Mr. Ogden seems less color blind, and so we had better strike while the iron is hot. I have no idea as yet when the ting will be published, but I can dictate enough in an afternoon to make the material available immediately.

It occurs to me that since the whole article will be devoted to Eliza Greenfield, we should have some pictures to go with the same. I have the one oil, and thanks to your kindness in sending me the Theatre Arts Monthly, a sketch from that might be used, were two likeness thought advisable. If but one is used, the

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portrait here in my boudoir will be satisfactory, for it has already been photographed, and came out rather nicely. Just for fun, I am going to try taking a likeness or two with the new films in my own camera one of these days, and see how it might turn out.

As Mrs. Elizabeth Greenfield, as you know, once owned the property whereon is built the lovely little old mansion of Cherokee which Charles and Myrtie own, a photograph of that house might be used in connection with the article, I should think, and some time between now and tomorrow, I shall think up another illustration that will be in harmony. Anyway, I am glad the Picayune has broken a prece dent and decided to do an article devoted exclusively to a negro, - the first in its history, I guess. It seems to be a step in the right direction, anyway.

In spite of Shreveport and St. Louis pilgrims today, I have been fairly busy, spending most of my time at Arenbourg, as planned. With the assistance of a couple of extra pair of strong arms, I got most of the magnolias, gardenias, pears and persimmons hoed, and a young forest of mulberry trees cut down. The latter grow like weeds and I am forever having to use an axe on them. The wind has been high all day, and although from the South, it tended to keep the thermometer down in the 60's. According to my radio it is raining now in Shreveport, and the forecast is for rain generally in this area tonight and tomorrow with the temperature in the 80's. And so the elimination of the weeds about the Arenbourg children, and the resulting opportunity for them to drink deeply from all impending showers, I believe today's little birthday celebration ought to be a success that will somehow carry over for days ahead.

You will like the enclosure from the Catholic, Postell. It came today in response to a note from me. I may have mentioned in an earlier note that he remarked that since the Chapel of St. Martin de Porres embraces both a statue of the Saint and a mural of a negro baptisin', apparantly the only common denominator was the coloring of the Saint and the figures in the mural, and that seemed insufficient to attempt to secure a harmony in the sanctuary. In my reply, I admitted that a single harmony did exist in the statue and the painting, but only in coloring, as he suggested, but I backed him up against the wall by my next query: - But speaking of a prevailing harmony, isn't there one you have completely forgotten, -- God. Hence the present Postell rejoinder.

Such a pleasant day altogether, thanks to your elegant air mail, thanks to all the happinesses in yesterday's post, and with the promise of additional showers of blessings for Arenbourg. May I say thanks again to you for so many happy birthdays.....

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the same line, "Literary America" - I have been thinking about it for some time, but have not had time to do so.

She mentioned it to me when I was in New Orleans, and I have been thinking about it ever since. I have been thinking about it ever since. I have been thinking about it ever since.

Memorandum:
Marvelous weather, with just the right little sprinkle on Friday night, followed by cloudiness on Saturday, to give the Arenbourg the moisture for which they had been prepared.

The pilgrim business, however, isn't so satisfactory, for the balmy weather seems to have set all the road runners in motion, and while with one drunken exception, the people have been delightful, I was frankly tired at the end of Saturday, and think I shall lock the front gate tomorrow until the end of the Easter holiday period has drawn off some of the meandering millions.

From 12:30 until 3 p.m. on Saturday a couple of delightful people were here. I forgot their name at the moment, although I have it somewhere or other. The man was with Life for 10 years and could tell me things about that organization of interest. I mentioned the Whitaker Chambers episode and he said everyone in Luce publications recognized that Chambers was clever but a terrific bag and everyone wondered how Luce could stand him, but stand him he did.

They asked me if I had ever been in Natchez. They said they had had an interesting episode in the place that would make them remember it. They had gone to the Post Office to get their mail, and while waiting at the General Delivery window, the Parcel Post window was handing out a big old sack of beans or dried peas to a rather elderly woman for whom the package seemed rather too cumbersome for her to manage readily. The man accordingly proffered his assistance and the lady graciously accepted. He wasn't struck by any particular elegance of her clothes and her car was something one wouldn't look at twice. On thanking him, the lady said that if he and his wife were to be in town for a day or two, she would be delighted to have them drop by her house. She gave them her name and address, which meant nothing to them, and later that day thought they would look up her apartment or cottage or whatever. Miss Myra, of course, was the lady, and Devereux the cottage.

The couple are doing a thing tentatively called "Literary America" -- in pictures. What brought them here was the hopes of finding something about Harriet Beecher Stowe's opus, an early log cabin such as housed slaves, etc. They were of course enchanted to find the cabins and the Simon Legree cotton stencil. While the husband was shooting pictures, I chatted with the lady. S

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She said they have done a book, as yet not published, but along the same line, - "Literary France, photographically."

She mentioned Vienna as having been her home. Her father was an associate of the Prince of Swartzenberg and was a member of Franz Joseph's cabinet, along toward the end of the Emperor's life. The Swartzenbergs suggested the Szeigs, of course, and we were off. I asked her if she knew Leopoldberg and was delighted to know she did, and the little graveyard and she spoke of many of the people buried there, including the old Prince de Ligne. It was a pleasant chat all around for me, and I think both husband and wife felt rested on leaving and that their visit had netted them some photographic material of value.

Mrs. Rand and her sister, Julia and some of their guests dropped in immediately afterward and there were four other groups before dark, so naturally I had had enough when I could turn to my reading machine. The "50 Great Americans" is too sketchy to be much, but it has been worth reading, not the least reason being that I learn from it, in the biography of Mark Twain that he himself disdained the "horse-laugh" quality of his books which he wrote only for the financial rewards, and always gave the script to others to read to take out the real stuff or he himself removed what he really thought, after the manuscript had been completed and ready for the publisher. I was glad to run across this statement, for I, myself, could never struggle through Mark Twain's stuff, and what with its popularity over such a long period having been so wide spread, I used to wonder what was the matter with me that I never could find much enjoyment in the stuff. The present authors of this biography say the only serious thing he ever did, pothomously printed, I believe, was "The Mysterious Stranger" or some such title which I don't remember ever having heard about.

Two letters from Washington on Saturday, and the one from Cousin Josephine isn't of any interest, I guess, but the one from Carolyn is, of course, if for no other reason that she at long last has taken pen in hand. On the next trip she and Helen made, I wanted them to make it when there was a moon, so that I could the better convey a theory I have about incorporating some night pictures of the Little River region so as to compile a series of photographs for a book of photographs of the plantation that would somehow embrace elements other than the clear cut outlines of high noon and by softening the landscape in certain sections, somehow incorporate a feeling more akin to the human touch of the painter if possible. I believe such a thing can be effected, particularly where great trees, and bannered mosses are the dominant feature of the photographs. If my calendar is correct, the girls have accordingly, by some miracle hit on the darkest week-end of the month, but that doesn't matter, I can explain my theories and we can try them out by contrasting noon-day shots with twilight effects of analogous or identical scenes, and thus determine if the thing will work.

Do hope your s

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Monday, April 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum: I think you're going to like this story. It really doesn't amount to much, and you may imagine you detect a "Mee-ow" or two in it, but actually it isn't written because of that but rather because it gives a faint shading, without which, one of the surfaces of a neighboring personality would be lacking.

First off, here is an imaginary situation; Let us say a youth considered the possibility of going to a costume ball, wearing the finery of an ante bellum planter. An old neighbor, living 8 or 10 miles down the road, - a lady who adored costume parties, applauded the idea and eventually sent word by two of her girl friends, living next door to the youth, saying that she would be delighted to contribute something or other toward the costume, a Prince Albert coat, a shirt with stocks or some such. In delivering the message, the two neighbors told the youth that they, too, would like to do something, too. Perhaps the youth might need a pair of ante bellum pants which they could properly cut to suit him or at least tack up the cuffs. And so the youth sent a message of thanks to the lady down the road, - only for the thought, of course, since she was never known to give anybody anything, and at the same time thanked his neighbors for their gesture of good will, and even went so far as to ask the ladies to help in taking measurements, pointing out the sample of stuff to be used, etc. As the time for the ball drew near, nothing was heard from the lady down the road, - which was to be expected, and the next door neighbors began to ask when they could start putting the hem in the new material for the trousers. The material was secured with dispatch, and cuffs properly tacked up, and the costume ball was a great success, both for the youth who had finally assembled all his paraphernalia, and particularly for his next door neighbors, who experienced a degree of satisfaction in having played such an important part in the preparations.

Curiously enough during March of 1950, Miss Sally heard I was contriving a chapel and sent word she would like to contribute something. It was such a pleasant, graceful gesture. Celeste and Madam Regard brought me the message and added that they, too, would like to participate in some way. I needed a pair of Lowell curtains to cut the daylight from each side of the stained glass, - and how right you were in your recent query about its origin. And they assisted me in taking the measurements. As the local merchant-planter carries lowells in his fine emporium, I assumed the job was practically done and was appreciative of the part the ladies had undertaken to play. After a week or two, they asked me about the material and when it would be available for them to put in the hem. I bowed myself out of their drawing room, cross the road to the store,

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and returning in a trice, presented the material on which the elder of the two ladies immediately set to work to run up a fine seam, and lo! the lowells are now hung and mighty pretty they look, too.

Because I know of no one in this world so directly opposite in kindness and generosity, I wanted Miss Lydia Lee of Lyme to hear of this. And what a lesson it presents to me, for now if I ever find a man starving on my doorstep, I shall know by example exactly what to do; to wit, - assure him without his asking that I want to make a substantial contribution to his efforts in securing nourishment, and in proof thereof, offer him an empty plate and a fork, so he may be thus all provided for by my kindness as soon as he secures something to eat. Don't you think so....

Heat, sunshine, high winds and drought, --oh, yes, and pilgrims. So turns this first Monday in April. The gentle rain of a couple of days ago started the grandiflora magnolias at Arenbourg to putting out new leaves, and I feel that water applied at such a time to their feeding system induced considerable growth. And so my labors at Arenbourg today have been nothing but toasting water, and what with the breezes having died down with the coming of dark, I think growing pains should be felt all over Arenbourg between now and dawn.

The nicest pilgrims were from Minnesota, a man and his wife, possibly manufacturers or small farmers, without other than formal education but obviously good souls. Next to the scintillating suavity of the Edgar B. type, I like this bracket of pilgrim best. They had never heard of Melrose before, had never read a book about it but were nevertheless anxious to see what was to be seen. On departing, the man gave me five dollars, both he and his wife saying this was the best that had meant most to them of any they had ever made. Lord, what a privilege to give such people a glimpse into a way of life that they had dreamed of but probably never quite believed.

While I think of it, I wonder if you will keep an eye open for a print of the head of Christ, usually known as St. Veronica's Veil, or some such by an artist, woman, or believe, whose name eludes me. You may recall the story has it that while carrying the cross to calvary, Christ asked a woman for a handkerchief to wipe his face. Later Veronica noticed something on the veil, after he had returned it to her and discovered the likeness of his face remained on it. The painting gives the impression the canvas is of linen and the portrait is merely the head of Christ. I have seen it in one size only, about 10" by 10" or some such, I am wondering if it comes in a much larger size or not. I think eventually it might be nice for the Chapel.

At supper, I asked me if I knew Frances Parkinson Keyes, whom he doesn't. He said she had sent him a book, arriving today. "All This Is Louisiana" a Harper publication. He said there was a picture of Yucca, the African House and the big house. He must have forgotten to send it over. What I want to see is the written material to discover, if possible, where she got her particulars.....

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Tuesday, April 4th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The weather report this morning proved correct. At 6:20 the forecaster reported that a cool mass of air was moving out of the North. It passed Shreveport at 5:25, tumbling the temperature downward with remarkable speed. At Melrose the thermometer was in the upper 70's at that hour. It remained there until 8:55 by my clock, when it started skidding in this area, and it has been in the 60's all day, with a faint sunshine that made out of doors laboring a delight.

Gora's pralines, as mentioned in a letter from Mrs. Bowman the other day, came to hand this morning. I am afraid they will not reach you when the Easter bunny makes his Sunday rounds, but perhaps they will taste as good early in the week, I hope. I had intended to return the Albert Schweitzer book long ago, but neglected to do so, and so I am sending it along with the pralines. I have also included a photostat which Friend Postall sent me the other day, thinking you might find a few familiar names at this bend of the river on the map. I haven't had anyone who could go over the map with me to my satisfaction and so am pretty much in the dark as to most of its details. As I understand it, the only date on the thing is in the statement:

"Approved, 1858".

And that doesn't seem to mean much and is certainly misleading, since one would assume that 1858 might be the date the map was compiled. But as the stream is given as "Red River", we know the map was made prior to 1832 when Red became Gane River. Then, too, Yucca's owner is given as Louis Metoyer, and we know possession had passed from him to Hippolyte Hertzog in the 1840's.

And so I am inclined to think the name Walmsley doesn't mean much either, since he may have been merely an official who approved the map in 1858, and I have about concluded that this map may represent the results of the final decisions as effected by the Land Office under Legin Wailes, immediately following the purchase of Louisiana by the U. S. Government.

Perhaps your bright eyes and penetrating judgement may discover some definite date that will establish the year in which these tracts and their owners were set down on paper. Naturally I

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shall be curious to learn who seems to be owning Arenbourg, so far as this map goes.

I take this map to be the earliest extant of U. S. maps of this region. What we shall probably never know is when the Yucca-Arenbourg tracts were originally granted and to whom, since the original grants, apparently to Marie Therese Coin-Coin Metoyer must have already been broken up, possibly by her to allot portions of the same to her several children, prior to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Undoubtedly the original grant was from the French Crown, confirmed by the Spanish Crown and divided to the several children so that when the U. S. Government took over Louisiana, the Yucca, Arenbourg and adjoining tracts had already passed from the ownership of the mother to the children, and so the Federal Land Office merely confirmed what in reality was an accomplished fact, and by this confirmation obviated any need for detailing previous owners.

I suppose Augustin Metoyer's name appears on a tract more or less across the river from Louis Metoyer. On the same side of the river with Augustin Metoyer was Suzanne Metoyer's plantation, and it will be interesting to see if it is indicated. I am not sure if either State or Federal Government in the early years of the 19th century admitted that women could hold title to land, and therefore if Suzanne's name does not appear on a tract near Grandpere's, then it is undoubtedly because it may have had to be listed under the name of a man, possibly Augustin or another of her brothers. Since she was the holder of more slaves than any other woman in Louisiana, it would seem as though her tract should have been rather extensive.

I spilled a cup of coffee alone with Madam Regard this morning, Celeste being in town. She reported in confidence that the Knipmayers had told Miss Sally, of my Chapel, - they had asked me if they might, and Miss Sally inquired of Celeste if it might be true that I had a baptisin' picture on the wall. It seems the response floored both Madam Regard and Miss Sally, for Celeste instantly jumped on Miss Sally, saying she was unkind and generally out of order to criticize what I had contrived in the religious field. I declare, this Chapel business is a sight.

I intended to mention the other day, regarding your report that there was another colored Satin, - Benadict, the Moor, - or did I mention it already. Anyway, at the risk of repeating myself, I would say that "the Moor" sometimes in olden days indicated that the person bearing that extra name was of North African origin, and although possibly black as midnight, was likely to have been of Arabic descent, and therefore Semetic as to race rather than negro, even as the great majority of Mohamedens of today are of the Semetic race, which probably makes their antipathy for the Jews, being of the same race, so virulent.

Forgive this dull epistle. I'll try to do better on the morrow.....

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Wednesday, April 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Torrents of sunshine but a cool breeze keeping the thermometer down to the upper 60's.

A couple of promises to receive people today impelled me to devote most of my time to Melrose with a view to spending practically all day tomorrow at Arenbourg, having arranged for some assistance in the hoe-waving business on Thursday. The Madam used to laugh at me for trying to plot out a schedule 24 hours in advance at Melrose, for she declared that no sooner were plans formulated than a dozen unknown things began to function to knock them into the middle of next week. I trust tomorrow may prove the exception to her rule.

Too sleepy last night to read much, I did explore a brief biography on George Washington Carver of whom I knew nothing except the reports of people who had had contacts with that remarkable scientist. I didn't know before, for example, that out of the red clay of Alabama he re-discovered the royal blue, lost for thousands of years, with which the Egyptians had tinted the tombs of their kings. The biographer remarked that while the peanut was the thing which seemed to capture the public's imagination so that people often forgot that that lowly plant was but one of dozens of things to which this remarkable man set his hand, - and made life the better for having done so.

The enclosure from Dora is striking, not only for its language but also, for example, because it mentions for the first time what he has been up to, or where he has been putting in his work-a-day life while in Oklahoma. Naturally I never made inquiry regarding this point but curiously enough, when people who had known him in Louisiana have asked me what he was doing, I invariably but vaguely said I believed he was associated with the University of Oklahoma. His letter, of course, requires an immediate response and the burden of my observation will be that he who hangs on for one second longer in the situation in which he finds himself inevitably wins.

Perhaps I mentioned a day or two ago I might stir up an article for the Picayune on certain private Chapels. The idea struck me as I penned the above paragraph that I should do one

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on forgotten chapels of the Cane River country, if I can find some appropriate phrases and the right kind of photographs. I guess the article could hang primarily on the Brevelle's St. Augustin, since everybody, including Colliers, seems to have photographed the place, but nobody has appeared in print with the thing, so far as I know. Little old St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou is so charmingly situated that it ought to make a good picture even though it is merely an ordinary colored Baptist Church. Then there is a Catholic Church in the neighborhood of Bayou Natchez which on occasion, it is said, has a picture that weeps tears or sheds blood or some such non-sense, and that ought to make a copy, for it is remote and comparatively unknown. Then there is St. Augustine's Baptist on Little River which is chiefly remarkable because the common field hands a few years ago demolished the larger St. Augustine's and rebuilt the same church with the same materials reducing the thing by a quarter or a third, and the whole accomplished within a month or two. And for sheer achievement, that really beats anything I ever heard of in such a line, for common field hands are not famous as carpenters, and how they contrived this fete, and sawed the stuff correctly so that it came out exactly as planned is something I shall never understand unless I merely charge it off to a miracle. Let's see, that gives us a couple of Catholic and a couple of Baptist Churches, and by putting in Miss Sally's private Chapel at Magnolia and our own little Blessed Martin outfit, I guess we ought to have filler enough for a couple of pages in the Picayune. Doing the thing with Carolyn would be more to my liking but frankly that girl fades out of the picture with such complete abandon, I think I shall have my hands full if I try to achieve a photographic book with her, counting myself lucky if contacts can be sufficiently maintained with that little will-o'-the-wisp to ever joint pictures and text together.

As for the Picayune, or any other publication, the reason for printing such an article, I suppose, would hinge on the St. Augustin Church, with the other five units thrown in for amplitude. I am hoping that if Carolyn does stay for a couple of days with a view to doing some stuff for the State Department, we can track down a couple of vanishing mules so that with them we can bring to lay a frame work for the Emma story in pictures. This would leave the Church business to la Holloman's camera, and while she isn't much of a photographer, still the shots might be sufficient for newspaper stuff. In a way, I hope I don't see the Holloman woman before Carolyn passes this way, for Carolyn might have some ideas for a quick article with some quick but fairly good pictures. Still, with two such unpredictable bags, it is difficult to guess which choice to make, and yet it does seem to me there must be a story in the religious thing that would have some appeal, if to none others than the Miss Sallys and the Madam Regards.....

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Thursday, April 6th, 1950.

Memorandum: I did practically nothing I had planned for today, although both at Arenbourg and at Yucca, I did undertake the "cutting of a few pieces of pie". Mrs. Holloman telephoned this morning to ask if she might take dictation this afternoon. I agreed and felt like boxing her ears to boot when, upon her arrival, I discovered she had altered some material I had given over the telephone the other day and forwarded the same to the Picayune without my approval. There wasn't anything especially global about the changes, but I strenuously object to a person of her limited knowledge undertaking such a move when it isn't necessary. I had given her Mrs. Greenfield's name as Elizabeth and the Klack Swan as Elizabeth or rather Eliza. She eliminated the use of any first name for Mrs. Greenfield and substituted the name Elizabeth for Eliza for the slave. She never had been able in her research to find any first name for Mrs. Greenfield, she explained. I asked her where she thought the first name came from and in whose honor Elizabeth Female Academy was founded. She then broke down and confessed she had discovered that I had been mistaken about Elizabeth Female Academy having been founded by Mrs. Elizabeth Greenfield, for after consulting certain Methodists, - including her husband who is of the persuasion, and after confirming the matter in some book or other, she found that it wasn't Mrs. Greenfield, as I had dictated, who give the money for the establishment of the school but quite another person, - a Mrs. Roach.

She seemed dumb-founded when I explained to her that Elizabeth, widow of Jesse Greenfield, married Benjamin Roach but strange as it might seem, had retained her first name, Elizabeth, in spite of having married a second time.

What a bag.
Well, there is no use wasting energy by elevating eyebrows with such a pice of baggage, but I did lay down the law that no more stuff was to go forward for publication without a final check being made following any changes she might see fit to contrive.

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I gave her dictation from 1 to 3 and then sent her packing across the river, with instructions to get some data from the priests about some clerical stuff I wanted, and told her not to come back until she had heard from me.

The article, as finally submitted, had been bounced in so many quilts that I could scarcely recognize much inherited qualities of its papa but perhaps the dishy qualities of its mama shining through will make it more popular if not possessed of some of the more stalwart qualities the fond parent had expected. The important thing, of course, is that if printed as is, and of all things in such a Southern newspaper as the Picayune, it will cause a flurry in the Gulf area, and what with the D. A. R.'s still coupled with the singer of color, ought to supply marvelous fireworks to make the Anderson-Congressional Hall episode when copies are sent to the proper metropolitan columnist and magazines. Thanks to your timely suggestion, copies of it will also be forwarded to publishers of such magazines as Our World and Ebony and should, I should imagine, lead to something in that quarter.

From the enclosure from New Orleans, it would appear that something may be forth-coming concerning Joseph Mason, and I imagine almost anything might be whipped up for a Picayune Magazine Section since, so far as I know, nobody has ever done anything about him in the newspaper field. It seems odd, come to think of it, that Stanley Arthur should be supply such material to me for such a purpose, and would probably seem odder to him if he suspected the ultimate destination of the data for which he has been asked.

On the home front, the weather remains cool and dry with a weak sun slanting through thin clouds. Tomorrow will be the same but warmer according to the Weather-Bureau, with a promise for showers, - I hope, for Saturday. This will give the Arenbourg children a nice drink and tend to cut down the road-runners.

Pat came home from L. S.U. this afternoon and his father and step mother will arrive sometime tonight. The General is scheduled for tomorrow night. J. H. told me Sister called last night and said she would pass this way en route to Alexandria on Friday morning. It is always good when she and Joe are here at the same time, they both have such luxiant perruques on which they can wear each other out.

Saw Celeste for a moment this morning, just before Dr. Knipmayer arrived, the first time in two or three days. She was madly dusting blinds on the gallery of the big house, having apparently succeeded in wearing herself pretty well to a frazzle before the week end gets under way. Her several dusky assistants were oozing mirth and saying nothing.....

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Friday, April 7th, 1950

Memorandum:
Good Friday, and I find myself wondering how it got such an adjective, for it seems odd indeed that the day set aside for recalling Christ's death should be styled "Good".

It was a case of all hands to the pump for the waking hours today. Along about 9, the entire tribe of Wenks blew in. They remained until dinner was half over, whereupon Sister and her husband flew out for Alexandria, leaving the children at Melrose, where they picked tyem up, as I understand it, along about 4:30 or 5:00.

Sister was sober, and put me in mind of what Lyle used to say about Weeks Hall being so much more disagreeable when on the water wagon.

They scrambled all over the place, much more after the manner of ants the people, it seemed to me, and now that the children are getting into the 8 to 11 year old class, full of energy and completely uncontrolled, their visit was as restful and devastating as a tornado.

I spent the entire afternoon at Arenbourg, and liked it. I had a couple of youths helping me and we accomplished much by way of discouraging weeds, cutting down young black locusts and similar embryo trees, and generally tidying up the place.

I guess the persimmons don't get much of an opportunity to grow naturally, I keep such a constant watch over them. Naturally I am curious to see how the grafting is coming along, or more precisely, if the grafts are getting established, and from the swelling of new buds along the newly attached stems, it seems to me we have a pretty good chance of having most if not all of them, "catch".

I sent out a call at sun down for anybody who had visting the little old Catholic Church on Bayou Hachez, where the figure of a man is said to appear through coat after coat of paint applied to the outside of the building. I got fully particulars from two or three angles, and so about convinced I may get a little paragraph

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or two for the article on forgotten Cane River Chapels. Some of the negroes visiting the Church report seeing the manifestation which is said to grow in size the longer one contemplates it.

Another set of observers report the bust of the man and his arms are strikingly apparent but that the head is more elusive. With these particulars to hand, and some additional observations scheduled for the telling this week end, I think there will be quite a nice voo-doo touch that may disturb the Catholic element a little but which ought to harmonize nicely with the superstition of the local natives in anything relating to religion, ghosts, etc.

The enclosure from Ida Mazurette is heartening. I am so glad that, after all these years of being flat on his back, Charles has at long last consented to receive medical attention.

A note from Rudolph indicates he will pass this way on Sunday evening. That will be soon enough, what with the number of people scheduled to be here for the week end.

I took time out before sleep last night to dip into David Donal's "LIFE" Lincoln's Herndon, or however the name is spelled, one Herndon being A. Lincoln's law partner. It starts off as though it might be a good book, and as Carl Sandberg remarks in the Preface, it is rather remarkable that this exhaustive study has been effected by one Donald whose parents were Mississippi planters and therefore in a section never too famous for its enthusiasm for Abraham Lincoln.

I shall break off at this point, for the hour grows late. While busy with mis-spelling Herndon, the General tapped at my door, having just arrived from Baton Rouge.

He asked me to come and sit with the family for a while at the house across the fence, but of course, I declined, feeling it better never to make any exceptions to my rule about going to any gatherings at that place after night fall. And so the General sat with me for a while, and that is always a pleasure.

He seems to have a slight case of the sniffles and says that the Joe Henrys telephoned from some place in Texas, saying Joe had developed flu or some such while driving in this direction and that they think they will turn back home to enjoy illness under their own roof.

Joe is inclined to be rather erratic, and it will surprise me not at all if he should appear quite unexpectedly along about noon on the morrow, or perhaps not put in an appearance before next 4th of July.

So turns the world in this section this Good Friday. I hope the weather in Manhattan for the week end will be more pleasant than the broadcasts of impending colds and damps for that region indicate....

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Sunday, March 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A lovely Easter in the Cane River country, and I am hoping the rumors of snow sifting down on the 5th Avenue parade are or is false.

Yesterday I brought an armful of Milk and Wine lilies from Arenbourg to grace the statue of good old Martin, and this morning when I went to Chapel, the air was heavy with their perfume. The first flush of dawn seeping through the stained glass was particularly lovely, intensified, I guess, because three of the older negroes tapped on the gallery floor, to ask if they might sit for a little while in the sanctum sanctorum. It somehow rounded out the human touch and made that early hour seem a little more significant.

And, as the day progressed, I looked back to that early hour with greater satisfaction, for it represented about the only quiet moment of the day, although I did listen between 6 and 8 to broadcasts of services from Mont Royal Chapel at Montreal, the Colorado Garden of the Gods and the Hollywood Bowl and found the music of the former and latter exceptionally fine.

Mrs. Rand came, bearing a bottle of wine to me in the morning, and inviting me to dine with them at the camp, but I declined, what with the family circle here forged for breaking up immediately following a final gathering at the board at noon.

After speeding the parting guests and returning to Yucca, a tapping at my door announced Rudolph's arrival. We started to collapse momentarily when Dr. Rand arrived. A drink, and he returned to the camp.

Celeste, Madam Regard, Rudolph and I picked up Mrs. Rand and the doctor about 3, taking them to open house at Beaufort where among other guests were Dr. and Mrs. Stafford. Dr. Stafford had been Dr. Rand's associate years before and had delivered all the Rand children. They live in Baton Rouge and were enchanted to see their old friends again. This was the first time Rudolph had ever visited the home of "Uncle Narcisse", and that gave him particular pleasure, being acquainted with the Journal of the Young Man of Fashion.

After a collation and chatting with dozens of guests, we pulled out. On nearing Malrose, we noticed a couple of cars by the gate, and so I descended from the chariot, while the balance of the occupants went on.

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on for tea at the Rand camp.

I found Mrs. Renee LaSalle and son and a Mrs. Barker and a few of her 13 adult children awaiting me. I spoke of Mrs Rand when I learned Mrs. Barker was an Alexandria resident, and the lady said Dr. Rand had delivered her 13 children. What a day of delivery all around.

I gave them a quick little tour, Mrs. LaSalle asking if she might come back one day shortly to discuss plans for the restoration of The Hermitage with me. She says she has satisfactory architects and engineers, but before proceeding any further, she would like to talk with me about several details, relationship of house to restored gardens in the offing, etc., etc. We set a tentative date for next week.

Before I bounced this group over the front gate, another group of people, kin of Frances Henry, appeared, and another tour. Before they left, Rudolph had returned from the Rands, and as soon as we were alone, I proposed getting out of our "Sunday clothes" to relax in plantation garb. But at that moment Celeste arrived, asking if she might have a glass of wine with us. She might, and while we sipped, some negroes knocked on the otherside of the house, asking if someone might telephone a message for them. One night.

And so the day played out and after second dark came other Easter guests, breaking in on the conversation which we never did seem to carry to any point on any particular subject.

Rudolph was in Hatcher Thursday and Friday and Saturday, I believe. He says Mary Lambdin's Mistletoe is lovely and touched on a few details I think Mary must have omitted from her descriptive letter of some months back. For instance, he mentioned the lovely pond to the right of the house where floated a flock of Canadian geese among the fleur de lis, etc. I don't recall any mention of this pond before.

Rudolph knows some people formerly from Dallas by the name of Miller who bought a colonial house in town, the one time home of the builder of Melrose (Mrs. Kelly's Melrose). It was from the general plan of this town house that the larger country mansion was laid out in the late 1840's. The town house is called Holly Hedges, and seems to be restored and furnished with taste, the furniture being more Directoire than Victorian, which is certain more in keeping with the colonial period that what usually finds in many of these earlier dwellings.

But the hour runs late and Rudolph is simulating sleep in spite of my tapping, and I am not going to have to simulate sleep in about a minute. I hope your Easter, snow or no snow, held something of happiness and gobs of relaxation. Your Easter bunnies were so nice to get my happy Easter under way....

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Monday, April 10th, 1950.

Memorandum: The sky has been cloudy all day, the humidity high along with a breeze from the Gulf, but no rain has fallen. It seems to be a toss up if we shall get a shower or clearing skies before dawn.

The unusual dryness, induced by the recent high winds, has impelled the plantation to slow up on its cotton planting, in hopes a bit of moisture may tumble down from on high to hasten germination with the planting of the larger stretches of cotton fields.

Rudolph got off just after dinner. We had a pleasant little chat this morning and at dinner, although I really didn't see so much of him since his arrival, for what with the Beaufort interlude and subsequent pilgrims, and a couple of visitors, it was rather late when we folded up our beads, and I have no idea if he kept awake long, for I fell asleep my head hit the pillow.

He said he sees James Cunningham frequently and the latter often speaks of coming to Melrose. I asked him to discourage such aspiration on James' part, for I instinctively felt he got into too many things and otherwise violated hospitality. Rudolph said, - and this was a mild surprise: - he had been told that James would be likely to read the books he wanted, and so felt no qualms about not lifting them from Yucca and Melrose.

I knew someone had lifted some of Lyle's but had attributed the entire business to that friend of little Miss Alberta who of passed this way last July. It seems we do know some nice people.

In view of the exceeding childishness of so many of the programs on the air, their endless Soap Operas, Hill-Billy Bands, etc., the thought occurred to me the other day that some philanthropist could really confer a blessing on humanity if he would operate a sufficiently powerful broadcasting station to reach lots of people, giving primary thought to quality programs which might not appeal to those possessed of the average 12 year child's mind, but to gray matter a little further developed. I suppose it might have to operate at a loss, and yet perhaps it might be like the Washington, Miss., tract I tried to get John D. Rockefeller to buy to a view of restoration. That same district which he disdained, is now bubbling with oil wells, - which is a sign

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An interlude between this page and the foregoing, during which first one and then a second laggardly secretary arrived, and I have had the delights of a grand conversation with you.

What bright, bright eyes you have, for what you detected at the right of the picture of the nandina hedge are bananas. I planted half a dozen roots at the point where the East extremity of the Masion de la Reine, its front gallery facing the river, should eventually spread its brick pavement. The plants did rather well last year, reaching a height of 6 or 7 feet. Within a year or two there should be an imposing group, since each root usually begets three additional stalks each succeeding season. I am glad to know of the Hare publication relative to the photograph of the Black Swan. I appreciate sincerely your kindness in offering to have a copy made, but I am using a photograph of the oil portrait of the lady for the Picayune, sent to the paper some time back. Curiously enough, the photograph of the portrait turned out ever so much better than the original, since the background, too dark in the original, came out very light in the photo, thus bringing out the ebony of the Swan's coloring in splendid relief.

I haven't been able to track down "I Take Your Word" during the last few weeks, too much static obtaining at the time of the broadcasts. I believe I know Mrs. Woods of Kampti, that town, as you know, being just above Natchitoches, on the way to Briarwood. - I am glad to have news of Anita and Agatha and it is pleasant to know they will be seeing each other shortly. Your mention of Nadine reminds me that I haven't exchanged letters with her since the response to her last one of a year or so ago, perhaps, which was forwarded to you at the time. I probably should have skipped reference to the Adam's death, had I been writing her, for following the time she so unaccountably kicked over the traces, I thought all mention of her might better be omitted. I also assumed it was Nadine who had a quotation from some well known poet, contrasting unfavorably southern gardens as opposed to northern ones, - a single slip of paper, perhaps 10 lines quoted, and posted from Los Angeles, or some such. The Madam never suspected, in fact, she was in such poor mental condition at the time it chanced to arrive, that its import never struck her and she found the poem rather pretty. And for such a shaft to be shot seemed a little futile and, assuming Nadine did send it, quite out of keeping with her ordinary sense of balance, -- the only other being the somewhat wild letter forwarded about the same time. So glad you liked the cherry beverage. It is possible R. B. Macy may buy the same wine in bulk and bring it out much less expensively in bulk. Again my thanks for a grand, grand letter...

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Tuesday, April 11th, 1950.

Memorandum: A lovely day and lots of things to grab off the minutes so that night came down on me before I realized the day was half spent.

And there was the social side, too, which was pleasant. Little Lestan's niece, Mrs. Lester Hughes, born Clotilde Prudhomme, came to see me this morning. Celeste was having some ladies for dinner at noon and Miss Clotilde wanted to pass by Yucca. We chatted a little but too soon were joined by Celeste and some of her other guests, proving for the millionth time that only two can talk. It was noon when they left and I declined the invitation to join them either at the board or at dessert. This afternoon Mrs. Rand, her sister, Julia, and B. Randolph came along about 3 o'clock or perhaps 4, and remained for an hour or so.

Madam Rand told me quite frankly that Sister had come to her house last Friday and had asked her to come up here and drag out certain types of Native Louisiana iris, and then send them to her by way of Frances Rand, Jack who is coming down this way from her Shreveport home later this week. I told Mrs. Rand I thought Sister ought to have any flowers from Melrose she wanted, and that as far as I was concerned, Mrs. Rand could always have anything she wanted for herself, including the big oak, if she felt so inclined, and that she didn't have to explain anything to anyone as to what disposition she made of her hauls. But, I hastened to add, the rest of the Henrys didn't want Sister to be hauling things out of here because she has hauled so much more than everybody's share during the past 30 years, and that I would say but definitely No to such a roundabout proposition. I pointed out that under normal circumstances the transfer could be effected easily enough without anyone being the wiser, but no sooner had we, - Madam Rand and I accommodated the bag, she would hasten to Melrose and announce that Madam Rand and I were despoiling the garden behind everybody's back. For that is the way she invariably bites the hand that tries to give her a hunk of meat. I explained to the ladies I had to go to Yucca, - we were in the front garden, - and that I would expect them to drop by when they

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had completed their stroll. I sent a gardener to them, fortified with much big cardboard cartons, spades and wrapping paper for whatever they dug. I remained at Yucca until Adam Rand appeared, and accomplished by my absence precisely what seemed best for all concerned under the circumstances.

On the side of the servants, a embryo racket seems in the making. Mattie, the cook, with the voice of an outraged duck, apologized to me on Sunday morning, saying she was sorry her little boy had worried me so, for Sam Peace say you was complaining about my little boy makin' so much noise, banging your gate with the bell on it.

Nobody likes Mattie's 7 or 8 year old child but so far as I know, he never rattled the bell on my gate in his life. I told her I didn't know anything about the business, since I had never heard of the matter before. Later I learned that Sam Peace, who is Mattie's one time husband, - he figured in the Friends of Joe Gilmore, loathes Mattie's illegitimate offspring with an incredible virulence because Mattie has taught her disagreeable brat to mock Sam in the rather peculiar way he has of rising on his toes with each step, and it is assumed Sam had a single desire in making up the tale, to get Mattie to keep the child at home and not be forever dragging him around her place of culinary operations where Sam constantly bumps into him.

So stews the pot in that direction.

I am so glad you told me about the project of some time back in which the United Nations contemplated some kind of an institution wherein the peoples of all faiths might find mutual satisfaction in worshipping God, each sect to his own especial method. I hadn't heard of it until you spoke of it but the idea sound grand to me. As a matter of fact, I haven't been so pleased about such a subject since I read in the Memoires of Marco Polo how old Kubla Kahn celebrated the chief religious day annually of the three greatest religions of the world of the 1400's. I might add that little old Miss Clotilde, being a rather strict Catholic, mildly surprised me today when, after viewing the Chapel, and learning that negroes might visit it when they pleased, declared that "Baptisin' or no Baptisin", I think the spirit behind this Chapel is about the best I know of in the Parish". So there you have it, --me and Kubla Kahn and the United Nations. Religion, you must agree, as well as politics, makes strange bed fellows.

A letter from Dora which I inadvertently misplaced, speaks of running through the Omnibook version of Alice's "Natchez Woman". Dora likes Alice but doesn't like what he reads in Omnibook. In your opinion, does that publication fairly reflect the general tenor of most of the books it boils down and serves up in modified or shortened garb. I have never read Omnibook and would have to be acquainted with the original version of a book, I suppose, to get an adequate idea of how the condensed offering might or might not conform....

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C. Y. Cannon
4/7/50.

Wednesday, April 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

1945, and the Red River flood flowed by Melrose in the Cane River channel at its maximum height; Mr. Roosevelt died and the first grandiflora of the season unfolded its lovely waxen chalice.

1950 and dry-dry; the Presidential health in apple pie order and the Melrose magnolias still in bud

1945, as of May 8th, and the first gardenia of the season blossomed and Hitler committed suicide.

1950, April and the gardenias are beginning to show signs of embryo buds while the world fumbles around with the Atom. And just why I set down all this stuff, I haven't the vaguest notion.

Another lovely day and thanks to partial cloudiness, work out of doors swung along under ideal conditions. Tonight the cloudiness seems a little more intense and I am hoping for a shower. I don't mind saying Arenbourg needs it, for it seems to me we scarcely ever get more than we can manage. What is surprising that even the cotton planters concede that a little shower wouldn't do any harm.

I think the enclosure holds nothing of interest. It is from Brigham Young's grandson, G. Young Cannon, but it may indicate that he is a civilized person, and even if such letters don't entertain, they somehow afford a measure of pleasure as an evidence of good souls scattered about the earth.

Mrs. Combs telephoned today to say that one of her charges, a colored youth, has just been released from Reform School and at the moment is unable to secure any employment. Having seen people giving me a hand at Arenbourg, she wondered if at the moment there would be any work there for him for a day or two, so that he might not find too much time hanging heavy on his hands immediately after his return to civilian circulation. What with so much planting of cotton going on at the moment; I could readily make use of a husky youth to corner some of the stretches where the new hedge is dying to get a head start of the surrounding weeds, and so I reckon the youth will labor Friday and Saturday with me on that project, and in the coming week, the Welfare

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Office hopes to locate something for the youth in town. It is pleasant that the needs of the three concerned coincided so neatly. The only important thing about the whole business, however, is that the youth get started back on the right road, and weeds or no weeds, if that is accomplished, the concerted action in this initial step will have been ever so worth while.

From the telephone conversation, I gathered that the office felt that if the youth could present himself in town as having assisted in lawn cutting or weed pulling or whatever in some nearby employment, he might find a permanent niche more quickly in town. I hope.

Ora telephoned me today, merely to say that she hadn't forgotten me, but that the convention of librarians in New Orleans, - which was busy and withal pleasant, was followed on her return home by too many days in the hospital attending one of her sons who developed some alarming nasal difficulty. She said she found a pamphlet or book or some such on Versailles which she bought for me but which she was determined to deliver by true hand rather than by post. As we chatted, it struck me she could find something in the library for me, - if Quakers ever went in for divorces. I am under the impression they did not believe in divorces, and if so, Mrs. Holloman's change of the Black Swan text to make Mrs. Greenfield a Quaker, will be all the more hilarious. And apropos of nothing at all, did I ever mention how amusing I found it once upon a time when Bernard Fay was reading us something in French, - something about Benjamin Franklin, I suppose, and how he pronounced Quaker as though it were a French word, and if you don't think it sounded funny, merely trying saying Quaker in some simple sentence, all in French, such as She is a Quaker, or some such.

My Lincoln Herndon reading came to an abrupt halt last night when I discovered the library had failed to send me the final third of the volume. Accordingly I turned to a rather interesting volume, - "We Who Speak English". I don't know the author's name at the moment, but he seems to be quite a sane individual, which certainly is remarkable, since experts in language are so often inclined to be so rigid in their particular subject, and this man doesn't seem to be at all. His primary rule for pronunciation seems to be based primarily on what is pleasing to those with whom we are conversing, and such a liberal approach must make his theory anathema to many a school teacher up and down the land.

Aside from Andre Maurois, it seems Cornelia Otis Skinner once wrote a thing, also called Family Circle, and that volume appears on my holding shelf. I shall sample it shortly, and if the lady is half as entrancing with her pen as with her spoken word, it ought to be entertaining.....

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Postell 4/11/50

Thursday, April 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Not the offer to make a hem....but the whole garment, - St. Veronica's Veil, reached me in this morning's post. I cannot tell you how surprised I was, and how moved I felt by your lovely gift for the Chapel. It is perfectly grand, and while it will strike a perfect note against the mud walls, and while others will like it for its sheer beauty and its appropriateness, I shall always love it because for me it will always represent a little bit of you.

The surprise element but completely floored me for what with time playing the tricks on all of us that it does, the calendar would have pointed to not more than a week back, had I been asked to name the date on which I made inquiry about this item. I suppose it was the error that made the surprise so complete, since I never in a million years would have supposed my letter had more than reached you by now, when Lo! (to quote la Beaumont), here arrived the fruits of your response to my inquiry.

It's going to be a while before I hang it, for I want to try two or three different treatments in the framing. I may be able to find some old cypress boards at Arenbourg or some old cedar planks at Ucca, rough and unpainted, and somehow I may contrive these into some sort of a frame. If this works out to my liking, I shall then give the picture, - but of course not the frame, a coat of shellac to preserve it from the humidity. There isn't the slightest question in my mind that your gift is going to be the dominant note and the most striking element in an atmosphere which is going to make a profound impression on everyone, and particularly, to quote Will Percy, on the only two elements of the population that matter, - the negroes and the artists.

I cannot tell you how enchanted I am with this splendid item, and several clusters of oak leaves should be draped about your crown for having so marvelously contrived such a gift that will mean everything to the Chapel while automatically its presence in the Chapel will automatically convert the same into a special oratory just for me, what with the presence that will forever stand forth whenever I am in this talisman of yours.

And your letter came in today's post, too, your Easter letter, which is one of the loveliest anyone could have written. I have so many things to thank you for, what with all the particulars you included.

Next best to seeing the Viennese collection at the Metropolitan with you was accompanying you on the delightful tour your pen afforded. I don't recall ever having seen a salt cellar of Cellini's, although

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I have read of them, and it seems to me he has something to say about one or more in his autobiography. I don't recall ever having seen a reproduction of the Clouet of Charles IX, although, if it be etched rather than painted, it does seem to me I recall one he did both of Charles IX and his bride, Mary Stuart, the famous Scottish Queen whom the world never seems to remember as having first been Queen of France.

As for the cradle of L'Aiglon you mention as being in the same exhibition, could this be the one, possibly in mahogany, with a bronze or possibly wooden figure of Fame or Glory or some such, standing at the head of the cradle and from whose uplifted arm the canopy of the cradle was suspended. It seems to me I have seen sketches of this, but it is a little hazy.

I am glad you were able to dine with your girl friend on Easter. For both of you, the turkey was twice as good, being able to attack it jointly. I am hoping the freedom from having to prepare a banquet in your own menage gave you an opportunity to dip into a heap of other things which otherwise might have had to go unfiddled with, had you been confronted with half of South America clamoring at your own board.

How nice that you had an opportunity to dip into a scrapbook. I wish I had taken time to turn through it before it went forward, for then I might have been able to say what house one of my inimitable sketches passed itself off for being. If Elizabeth Brandon Stanton's correspondence appeared in the book, it is possible a sketch of Windy Hill Manor may have been in the volume, - or any one of a hundred other houses. The Windy Hill Manor House was more or less in two parts, - the earlier section being in the rear of the newer section, the two units being united formerly by a dining room-gallery attached to the front of the Osman section and the rear of the Stanton part. The Stanton (front) section made up of front gallery, hall with stairs in the middle, drawing rooms on each side, with flankers beyond the drawing rooms. One entered the dining room by going straight through the central hall, from front to back, and this long oblong room ran the entire length of the Stanton (front) section of the house.

I smiled at your account of the fortunate encounter with the census taker. Isn't it odd why some people are so violently opposed to such a measure, and particularly as the data compiled is of such inestimable value both for the present and untold generations to come.

From the enclosure, one gathers that Friend Postell has had quite enough of Mrs. Holloman. Don Worsley rounded up the papers, - Metoyer, etc., as mentioned in connection with the recent U. S. U. list. I shall not mention them to Misenthusiasm but she wouldn't know how to interpret them, even though she should stumble over them. Surely she and little Miss Alberta were made for each other mentally, and I am all in favor of each of them getting all the pleasure they can find in their mutual helter-skelter conversations. But I must break off, and how happy has been my day, thanks to you and all your kindness to me..

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Friday, the 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another grand day, thanks to God and to you.

Your letter to hand in this morning's post and I am tremendously indebted to you for all the information therein contained, and most especially as to your own good self.

The data covering Joseph Mason sounds marvelous. On the strength of some of the points you touched on, I made a couple of notes at the top of a page, after which I wrote a letter to Mrs. Holloman regarding the same. On second thought, however, I think I shall not mail the letter, but shall await her next visit when I can pour forth the stuff which by then will have been fairly well formulated in my head. After all, if I dictate the stuff rather than passing along notes for her to get dizzy about, I shall have at least saved some time and possibly a few hopeless snarls. If I haven't already destroyed the letter, I shall attach the same herewith, feeling you may find interest in a couple of the points I suggest be covered in the article. It is possible the parallel between intrinsic value as they compare with artistic ones may be a little far fetched in the example of Louis XIV melting down the marvelous wrought royal plate with a view to reducing it to silver. As it is possible I may have a response from you prior to my first opportunity to dictate the article to la Holloman, I shall appreciate your own reaction as to whether this example is too far fetched or not.

An inter upction, as between this paragraph and the one above, to satisfy the need of a stalwart youth who, being unable to write, passed this way to ask me to assist him in penning a love note. As so often in the past, I find myself regretting I did not make a carbon copy. His dictation was unfaltering and delivered at such a reduced speed as to suggest he was conversant with the time element involved in taking down the spoken word. He indicated the termination by a slight wave of the hand, and the presence of a new paragraph by a double wave of the hand. But what was really astonishing about the rather long epistle was the blank verse in which most of it was dictated, while two paragraphs were in perfect meter and rhymed, I believe, without the writer ever sensing it. Such manifestations are exceedingly rare, of course, but they have happened two or three times over a span of years, and I am always as amazed at such manifestations on their appearance a second time as I am the first.

If tonight's somewhat elaborate weather report is to be accepted as correct, it is almost as surprising in another way as is the poetical gifts of the youth cited above. The Weather Bureau asserted the high for that city today was 65 and Alexandria 56. What with Melrose in between and registering a 76 during the afternoon, I can't seem to make such sense out of such

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My second secretary brought me a clipping from the Natchitoches Times which I should have included herewith had he not inadvertently put it back in his pocket. I shall see him on the morrow, I hope, and if not, try to secure another clipping for your delectation. It is a brief account of a report made by Athenese de Meziere to Governor Ungaza, - if my memory serves, and the spelling of that name makes me think my memory doesn't serve. The article states that in 1776 there were about 500-whites and 400 blacks in Natchitoches, - meaning the Natchitoches country, I assume. There were also about 50 male and female Indian slaves, - an interesting note, don't you think, since we seldom think of the Indians as being slaves. There was also an account of the exports, I take it for the year 1776, and although this is from a newspaper, always subject to error, I believe my memory so far as the figures go, is correct: to wit

1,000 horses, - which seems like a heap.

100 mules.

30,000 packages of tobacco., (probably the ~~xx~~ staple at the time)

9 quintals of indigo. (I haven't the vaguest notion what a quintal may be, and have no one to consult a dictionary.)

36,000 deer skins. And I shudder to think of the slaughter.

5,000 pots of bear oil. (And I'd like to know how big were the average size pots.

The most striking feature of this list, of course, is the commodity which does not appear, -- cotton. I believe cotton didn't really get to going in Natchitoches Parish until along about 1800, -- it seems to me I have heard the date 1804 given, but that may be merely the first record of its presence. Still, this early 1800 date is near enough, for, as you know, the Mississippi remained true to indigo, Tobacco and Sugar, the latter in small dribblets, until the traveler in Mississippi brought news of the invention of the cotton gin and old Daniel Clark's slave blacksmith, contrived the first one ever to operate in the region fanning out from the Gulf.

I have no doubt that Marie Therese Coin-Goin in the 1776 period must have been taking pot shots at bears, so to speak, and banging off deer from the gallery of Yucca, for such quantities of these animals would suggest they must have been all over the place. No wonder the wooden bars, still intact, closed off entry of bears and panthers at all windows. But I suppose much of the exported material may also have been timber or barrel staves, for the islands of the West Indies, then without wood, and needing the barrels for exportation of molasses to Europe. Forgive this endless speculation about old days at Yucca, but I shall probably return to it regardless from time to time.

"He (Joseph Mason) now draww flowers better than any man probably in America."

from a letter of James J. Audubon to his wife,
Lucy Audubon,
and further,

"In another letter, Audubon said, after having heard of the death of Joseph's father: "On that account, I am more attached to him....."His talent for painting is fine, his company is quite indispensable", .1

In another letter, he says after having heard of the death of Joseph's father, "on that account, I am more attached to him....."

April 14th, 1950.

Dear Miss,

The above are a couple of quotations which we may find convenient to use in the article about Joseph Mason.

I am digging for some rather elaborate material, both in the New Orleans and New York areas, and have no doubt we shall have adequate data within a few days to contrive an article with dispatch. I am under the impression a single sitting might enable the frame work to be well set up, and only a second sitting to polish off the connecting material which appears to be abundant.

You will recall that the author of Audubon's America, in referring to the rift that developed between Audubon and Mason that to that author's way of thinking, Audubon was probably wrong and Mason was probably right in whatever the controversy was about.

I have not explored any Ohio Historical Society, although I should imagine, if we need additional particulars, we might well find such in the Cincinnati Historical Society's records, for I believe the Mason family lived there and therefore that Society would undoubtedly be more conversant with the history of the Masons than any other.

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In the Audubon's America book, you may recall that a number of the plates for which Mason did the backgrounds are enumerated by number. Perhaps we can use some of these for illustrations. I think we should play down Audubon and play up Mason. One point to stress, it seems to me, is the fact that it was Mason's artistry that made popular the more scientific ornithological pencil work of Audubon. Audubon's bird drawings are gems, much of whose popularity depends upon the magnificent setting as conceived and executed by Mason.

Once during the wars of the Spanish Succession, the French treasury was completely exhausted and thus pushed to an extreme, Louis XIV ordered all the royal plated melted down and the silver converted into currency. Accordingly knives, forks, platter and even the great silver tubs of the giant orange trees of Versailles were cast into the furnace. But this treasure of inestimable value depended less upon its pure silver than the exquisite artistry of its workmanship, so that civilization lost a king's ransom in precious moveables while the Government gained scant if any advantage through its heroic conversion of its art objects into a few measly bars of silver.

Unquestionably if stripped of their Mason settings, Audubon's birds of the Mississippi Valley would still be interesting, but at the same time it must be conceded that it is the coupling of the Mason artistic treatment of flowers and leaves that gives these plates their popular appeal and their artistic triumph.

It is with such thoughts in mind that I think we should approach the sketch of the forgotten career of Joseph Mason. We should strive to detract from neither, but rather to cite them as another one of those remarkable combinations of history, wherein the gifts of one individual so perfectly supplements the attributes of another, as in mechanics, for example, the case of the Wright brothers, in literature, Beaumont and Fletcher or Boswell and Johnson.

But these and other details we shall examine when next you pass this way. I trust your week end over the Easter holidays in New Orleans was pleasant and that by now Mr. Holloman has completely recovered from his recent indisposition.

With kindest regards to you both, believe me,
sincerely,
francois mignon.

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Sunday, April 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A busy week end but withal ever so pleasant, with the thermometer on the cool side and the pilgrims few in number but excellent in quality.

I had hoped to get out a raft of correspondence this morning but other things and people intervened, and so tonight I shall have a go at a dozen or so, but not until we have had a little chat.

It will be a pleasure to write Madam Marco, ignoring her depressed state of mind to the extent of not mentioning it, naturally. And to Carolyn I shall ask her to bring the lady she mentions at another time. If she can fly down from St. Louis for a week end at Melrose, she can fly down from Washington or where ever she may be located for a later go-round. Assuming that Helen plans to come at the same time Carolyn does, it will be a case of "Two's company, three's a crowd", and while I can "eat two and sleep two", three isn't to be thought of at the moment.

And then there is the letter from Sister which will hand you a laugh, -- she and her plans for a jaunt to Manhattan. I shall respond in a vague strain, saying the last I heard from you the matter of a European trip (I won't mention Agatha's name) was mentioned, and as soon as I learn more particulars as to when you will return, I shall advise her. You may be sure I shall not touch on that point again until after she herself has returned to Louisiana. But in writing this, it occurs to me you really might be curious to see the bag, and if so, just let me know, or better still write her direct, Mrs. E. L. Wenk, 936 Ontario Street, Shreveport, Louisiana. Frankly, I can't imagine much pleasure, save that of actually seeing the phenomenon, but I leave it up to you. Personally, if I dwelt alone in an igloo on the South Pole and there was an opportunity to seeing one single human being and she was it, I should block off the front entrance with a cake of ice, but perhaps that only goes to show how disagreeable I am. In any event, I shall indicate in my response to her that a European trip is the big thing at the moment, and she can guess as best she can if it is already in progress or is something scheduled for May.

A letter from Robina indicates she gets her new car on Monday, and may get down this way sometime next month, possibly while Miss Alberta is here. She planned to go to the Blue Bonnet Festival at

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Marlin, Texas, this week end, so I expect we shall have a report covering Dr. Miller shortly.

I saw the rands three times today, Ed coming to see me for a little chat this morning and to invite me for dinner. I declined the latter, having accepted Celeste's invitation to dine with her family. I dropped by the camp around 2 o'clock, however, to chat with Dr. Rand for a bit until the Gordon Randolphs came. Back home I had a couple of lawyers from Shreveport, praying for a tour, and as it was concluding, we met Mrs. Rand, her daughter, Frances Rand Jack of Shreveport, and Mrs. Randolph, and it turned out they were acquainted with the pilgrims, thus giving them an opportunity for a pleasant exchange of amenities. Mrs. Rand brought me what she was pleased to style "my supper". From a preliminary investigation, it appears to be a mountain of spaghetti with a sprinkling of little onions through it, all contrived in some marvelous meat sauce, and under a blanket of grated cheese; an equally staggering portion of potatoe salad which a sampling indicated to be out of this world. Adding some slabs of ham and of turkey, a flock of green and ripe olives, a round of three kinds of muffins and a quart jar of custard, and you have a general idea as to what I have confronting me, if an when I get hungry before I am through galloping up and down this keyboard. It is to be hoped that some lucky wayfarers, late heading home for Little River or so such, may pass along the far side of the bamboo, and seeing my light, hazard the hope that something to sustain them on their journey may be waiting for them at this end of the "White Garden".

If I am unable to get the clipping about exports from this area in 1776, as mentioned in yesterday's memo., I shall at least be able to get a transcript which I shall send along eventually, thinking you might wish to paste it in one of your scrapbooks. I think I shall paste one in my Yucca volume, for somehow, as I think of it, the pictures brought up in the mind by that list, the astonishing abundance of animals gives a special tone to any picture of Yucca when one considers its surroundings 170 odd years ago. As I glanced at the barricaded windows giving on the front gallery this evening, considering that the list had omitted mention of everything in the animal line save deer and bears, I found myself instinctively reflecting that it is bound to have been "bars or bears", any way you sliced it in those days when Marie Therese Coin-Coin was raising her children in this house, the twins, Augustin and Suzanne being 8 years old at the time the de Meziere report to Unzaga was filed.

It has been trying so hard to rain but getting no where, and although the sky is starless tonight, it is obvious it isn't going to rain. And tomorrow morning Celeste and Madam Regard and a couple of grilz-friends head out by car for New Orleans for a three or four day frolic and the squirrels go round and round in their cage, finding the exercise just too Harper's Bazaar and coming out eventually at precisely the point they went in, save for one hem, of course.....

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Monday, April 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A nice fat envelope in today's post, and thanks a billion for your grand letter together with the remarkably clear photostats.

I didn't get around to explore the maps until after lamp light, and so I have arranged to have my secretary to pass this way in the dawn's early light of the morrow, when we shall further go up and down the land claims together.

I am impressed by your suggestion regarding the possible relationship, as between August and Augustine, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if they may have been the twins, the latter sometimes referred to as Suzanne, Suzette or just plain old Tante Zette. If Mrs. Holloman will only make up her mind and get the photostat or transcript of the Baptismal Record, already paid for long since, that document may throw some light on the matter, although since the extant document was rigged up from the early records in the late 1800's from the pre 1800 Register, subsequently destroyed, it is quite possible that merely Augustin and Suzanne may have been entered at the later time, since these two names may well have been firmly established in the public mind a hundred years after their birth, as a convenience in making a sharp line of difference when referring to them.

From my preliminary glance at the map, I would gather that Arenbourg's first division line must have fallen just inside either the Metoyer or the Roubiaux properties. This is the first time anyone around here ever realized that Mrs. Joseph Henry's father owned property in this section, so far South of Bermuda where in 1818 he built his residence on his Reform Plantation and where the house still stands. Curiously enough, there is a curiously narrow strip, about 20 feet wide along the Northern line of Arenbourg and which is more or less being planted on my part as a part of Arenbourg. This is a thin slice of land which J. H. acquired by gift from his father about 35 years ago, and lies between Arenbourg proper, once Metoyer property, and Alfred Lorenz lands to the North, old Emanuel Lorenz having been an ante bellum Spanish tailor who came to this Spanish colony to dress the King's troops, and ended up by marrying one of the mulatto heiresses. Someday I shall R. B. to run back the title on this narrow strip, and I shouldn't be surprised if it turned out to be a sliver from old Francois Roubiaux' original grant.

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By telephone I jotted down the data, as covered by the enclosed list, covering points revealed by the 1776 census. I judged the spacing poorly when I had it read back to me, so it doesn't go on a single side of the page, but, if you want it for your scrapbook, you will perhaps be able to transcribe it in a more compact manner for pasting. Within a day or two, I shall rearrange the data from my notes, and tack the paper in better grouping, on the inside of the shutter that protects the wooden bars in my boudoir window, giving on the front gallery. Architects and historians in particular, are always interested in the presence of these bars, and this notation, detailing the number of deer and bears rounded up in 1776, may more clearly suggest why, in view of the enormous numbers of animals, including the panthers, these openings were protected as they were, for Yucca must have been years old in 1776, and, as you will eventually note in the Chase diary, panthers were still a problem in this section in the 1850's when Yucca was about a century old.

I am enchanted to report an error on my part in my prediction we probably would not have rain last night. A little after midnight a gentle drizzle set in and perhaps almost an inch of rain came drifting down from on high. We really needed it and what with things at Arenbourg having lately been provided with nice loose earth about their feet, I think they drank deeply for the balance of the night. A thick cloud coverage kept the sun from shining today, and there seems to be about the same promise of rain for tonight. Of course the cotton planters, after one initial splash, are hoping for clear skies and high temperatures, but if it rains again on our side of the fence tonight, the abundance will not be too great, now that growth seems to be poised for its greatest effort of the year.

Before I had finished my stint in tossing off a dozen letters last night, I had the good luck to have a couple of volunteers to assist me in disposing of largess from the Rand larder. There was one item, a bouncing asparagus and avocado salad, which my helpers disdained as "white folks' food", and I am sure they were perfectly right, for I found it delectable, and was doubly enchanted to concentrate on it, since without anyone being deprived of a fair share of the entire repast, I got the lion's share of this particular item.

I heartily approved Lloyd's "We Who Speak English" chapter wherein he expresses approval of the Southern phrase "you all", a position that undoubtedly must slay the more tight-laced lexicographers. Lloyd declares, and I agree, "you all" is employed both as a courtesy and for clarity's sake "How are you all" and "Sam, you do this or that, and John, Henry and August, you all do the other thing"; Lloyd says what confuses non-Southerners is the way in which Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, etc., employ it exclusively as a singular rather than a plural form. And so Goodnight to you alone from all us-es.....

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Postell 4/17/50

Tuesday, April 18th, 1950;
Memorandum:

It was only in the dawn's early light that I realized the marvelous artistry of the splendid maps reaching me in yesterday's post.

How I shall treasure them always, for contrary to my impression the sun's only rival last night, they are not photographs but the handiwork of my Lady of the Lamp. Not enough oak leaf clusters have been assembled, taking all the military folks put together since 1945, to fashion a wreath suitable and fitting for your nobility and graciousness in contriving a likeness of this bend of the river to make it clearly comprehensible to me. I cast about in my mind for superlatives but find nothing adequate to express either my admiration or indebtedness to you for your infinite kindness in throwing this latest beam of comprehension in my direction. It goes without saying that I shall treasure them for ever in my treasury of most precious testimonials of your sheer goodness and industry in my behalf, for thanks to you, and only to you, am I able to formulate a picture of the country in which I dwell. What a commentary on the strange manifestations of the handiwork of God, that, after all these years of association with people living in this section, it is from you, who as yet has not even visited the region that I should find everything made clear to me of the landed arrangements of properties as they obtained for the first half of the ante bellum period.

How remarkable you are, how wonderfully kind you are, how brightly must shine the uncounted stars in your crown, for having brought so much light, so much understanding, so much affection from afar. How much I wish there might be a parallel between one of the great Russian composers of the 19th century and his invaluable friend, to be set up as between another great lady of the 20th century and another Tschicovski. But I strike not heavenly chords and so the parallel cannot be initiated. And yet how much poorer the world would be today had it not been for his remarkable friend, and how shadowy would be my own existence, were it not for my Lady of the Lamp, Lydia Lee of Lyme... what a marvelous dawn your handiwork has brought to me. How profoundly am I indebted to you for all the shafts of light that radiate from my path, thanks to your untiring devotion and selflessness and generosity.

And in today's post comes your letter, together with the most excerpts and observations regarding the notations on the Land Office Survey of the local region, so perfectly clarifying additional details regarding your post, arrive; as of yesterday. With the aid of my glass, I

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could readily determine all the finer points of regional land claims. So much that was cloudy before has now become so clear. I shall speak in detail of many of these points later. At the moment, my soul is so consumed with gratitude and admiration that I shall forego mention of technical details for another sitting.

Yesterday's clouds gave way to pure blue and gold today. This afternoon I could hear the tractors going full tilt beyond the bamboo hedge, getting the cotton planted in the fields sufficiently damp to insure immediate germination.

It was a fairly busy day, what with doings at Arenbourg tis morning, pilgrims this afternoon, and, --and quite unexpectedly, -- Sister and the children and Dan Henry and Nina McInness at post-supper time. Dan has been in the hospital in Shreveport for a few days, -- a hemorrhoides operation I believe, and Sister brought him to Melrose tonight, and Nina kindly drove his car down for him. Sister seemed to be pretty high, and asked me to make a round at the big house to see how Dan is doing at 2 a.m. word by a servant to ask me to make a round, too. It all seems so much like 1948.

Nina came over to see me at Yucca for a few moments before sun-down. She wants to return when little Miss Alberta comes to paint. She seems to be much as usual, and I am glad to have had an opportunity to chat with her for a few moments. She seems to think I ought to have a Victrola of my own, --an interesting idea, and threatens to send me hers. I put my foot down on that suggestion, but mightily although I did appreciate her kindness. She pointed out that her Texas property was paying a dividend, --but somehow tat didn't seem to cut much ice with me, although her impulse was certainly of the kindness. She and Sister and the children returned to Shreveport along about 8 or 9 o'clock tonight. I hope they make it safely, although I should have been happier for Nina's sake had a more sober driver been at the wheel than Sister.

Between Arenbourg and pilgrims today, I rounded up some lovely old worm and weathered eaten pickets which I shall use for the framing of the St. Veronice's portrait of Christ. I meant to ask, ever so far back, if you chanced to know anything about the biography of Gabriel Max, the artist who did that lovely set of portraits. I also ransacked the African House and Yucca to find some old hand made square headed iron nails, and these I found, not only the 8 smaller ones required for framing the portrait, but also one huge one which I shall drive into the cypress beam above the mud walls to suspend the portrait from, by means of an old bit of rusty wire form a forgotten bale of hay which I have been treasuring, -- the wire not the hay, for ever so long.

And so tings turn at this bend of the river, a bend never so beautiful as it appeared to me tis morning after examining your splendid handiwork, and then marching to Arenbourg to see the same in reality.....

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Myra Smith 4/17/50 4190

Wednesday, April 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I have already discounted the fact that any new piece of furniture or an new note of decors appears ever so prominent when first installed. And yet, in spite of the generous discounting I am convinced that your contribution to the Chapel dominates the entire sanctuary.

I assembled the ancient pickets from a crumbling fence, re-enforcing my materials with some elegant ancient square headed hand made nails, and what with a bit of sawing and hammering, I had contrived a frame, the like of which has probably never been seen on land or see until this 19th day of April in the present year of Grace. The wood is weather-beaten with an occasional fleck of gray-white, -- a forgotten trace of white paint applied a half a century or so ago. I avoided any attempt at making the corners meet, but rather intentionally extended the picket point two or three inches beyond what would otherwise been the corners of an oblong, one picket point protruding at each corner. With just a little imagination, one might hazard the remark that the whole thing had an alarming suggestion of a crooked cross, but since everyone is trying to forget the swastika, I am not bringing that point up. I didn't drive the nails completely into the wood, but left from a quarter to half an inch above the surface of the wood. The picture itself, when thus encased, has all the white border eliminated, with only the narrow black strip outlining the Veil. After searching more beams in the African House, I found one more old square headed nail, and that I drove into the cypress beam forming the South cornice of the Chapel, and from it I suspended an old rusty strand of hay wire to which the picture is hung against the mud wall, and more or less midway between to upright cypress beams encased in the mud.

The exquisite quality of the painting, already striking because of the extreme simplicity of its own background of the Veil, seems somehow doubly enhanced by the ruggedness of the frame, and I must say the picture so completely dominates the Chapel that the stained glass, statue and the great cross all seem to fade into nothingness as one steps into the oratory and is struck by the splendid spirit this creation radiates.

If my "No" to Carolyn doesn't deter her visit and Helen's, I shall have them take some flash-light pictures of the place, for I am impatient to rush off a picture of your triumph in making the Chapel but a complete success.

.....yam bin yd sov seer of two and star that is like 31

It didn't rain 2 cents worth today, but threatening clouds prevented me from doing much in the farther reaches of the neighborhood. But I did get in a few licks at Arenbourg early this morning. The grandiflora magnolias are certainly putting out new leaves, and I am hoping some new growth, too.

The more I have thought of something that happened at supper last night, the funnier and the more tragic it seems to me. Sister was no higher than usual, and her strident tone and erratic speech, forever revealing her lack of balance, somehow more or less conceals from me at least when she is beginning to get a pretty good edge on. In the midst of supper, the children withdrew, and the little girl was fiddling around at one thing or another, when suddenly, following much talk, addressed to the table on her mother's part, the little girl began skipping about, saying in a sing-song

"Tee-hee, ha-ha, ho-ho, mama's drunk again. Tee-hee, ha-ha, ho-ho, --mama's drunk again."

Both Nina and I elevated an eyebrow in each other's direction, but no one else seemed to think much about what was issuing from the children's department. And then, in the midst of things, Sister yelled at her daughter:

"Gammie, bring me that whiskey bottle over there on the sideboard and go tell Mattie I want some more coke."

And so the child delivered the whiskey bottle and danced on out to the kitchen to deliver the message, still repeating as she skipped along:

"Tee-hee, ha-ha, ho-ho, mama's drunk again."

I suppose there may have been three or four colored people in the kitchen, and apparently they were as shocked by such carryings-on as an civilized human being might be, for in mid morning, when I was returning from Arenbourg across the cotton field behind the white garden, where the tractors were planting, one of my ebony friends slowed up his machine as I was passing and with a full moon grin, half whispered:

"Tee-hee, ha-ha, ho-ho."

and with ashake of his head and a wave of his hand, stepped on the gas, and instantly was deep in getting this year's crop in.

You will note from the enclosure that I sent Miss Myra one of your humming bird feeding bottles. I think her response characteristicall gay. The Pierson letter was mailed on Monday and reached me today, which seems leisurely enough as a jaunt, what with the distance bbut 15 miles At that rate this out to reach you by mid May.....

Thursday, April 20th, 1950.

Memorandum: On June 2nd, I accompanied Knipmayer Day, and the lady accompanied her husband today for the first time in about a month, I guess. She wanted to see the Chapel. The doctor ushered her in. She seemed drawn to St. Veronica's Veil, and after sitting for a few minutes, started to leave, when her husband asked her if she didn't intend looking at the statue. She said the picture had had such a profound impression on her that she had completely forgotten to glance about at anything else. After a second day of considering the item, I still believe your contribution to the Chapel is the most moving element in the sanctuary.

The day has been delightful, all blue and gold, with the thermometer in the pleasant 70's. I suppose it must have been in the 40's last night, for the Shreveport Weather Bureau announced this morning that last night's low broke all records for April 19th during the 75 years that station has been functioning.

I suppose it is this prolonged comparative coolness this Spring which has discouraged the influx of insects, but regardless of that point, the Parish D. D. T. program is in full swing. This afternoon a couple of men came to say they would return on the morrow for a going over of the place. I O. K. ed that new item, so far as the rest of the establishment was concerned, but asked them to do Yucca forthwith. I reckon they probably prefer doing Yucca to any of the other buildings, for there is less work for them here than in any other building. Last year's method proved so satisfactory, I followed the same line of departure this year, --having them spray the front and back galleries thoroughly, walls and ceilings, and stopping abruptly right then and there. My theory is that since the mosquitoes do not originate within the house, if they are thwarted on the outside, it isn't important to spray the inside. As you know, a white film stains mahogany and I guess all dark woods, and casts a film over gold leaf, thereby requiring no end of covering over of furniture and portraits, or having them all hauled out of doors. And so, with all that excitement eliminated, I am enchanted to toss a few benches and bric-a-brac from the galleries to the greensward and just let the sprayers do their worst. I had them do the Chapel, too, of course, putting one of Madame Aubin Rocque's old nightshirts on the Blessed Martin, which was something of a riot, and removing the little crude benches and your Veronica's Veil. The whole operation for Yucca was over within 5 or 10 minutes, and for the balance of the Spring and probably well through July, if not the entire summer, the galleries will undoubtedly be insect free.

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I am reading Cornelia Otis Skinner's "Family Circle, and finding it altogether charming in its early chapters, she has somehow succeeded in giving such a convincing picture of the 1870s and 1880's when her parents were making their respective bows. Since there is a reference to the Atom bomb in one of the paragraphs, I take it the book must be post 1945, and therefore the title seems a little striking, assuming as I do that Maurois' Cercle de Famille probably appeared in English under the same title. Come to think of it, I guess his book, which I never read, was a novel while the Skinner opus is history and probably will become autobiographical as it progresses. Under the circumstances, I don't suppose identical titles would cause much confusion, although I must confess I should be a little startled, say, if the one time Mistress of Homewood should toss off an autobiographical skit entitled Swann's Way.

At dinner today, Celeste not having returned as yet from New Orleans, J. H. dined at the big house and had the very unpleasant neww to relate regarding the Wenks. Sister telephoned him last night to say the whole shooting match would be down for the week end. She has threatened such visitations before and then not appeared. I hope this may be the case in the present instance, but I shall know only when Sunday has come and gone. What with her unexpected appearance on Tuesday night, I had no occasion to answer her last letter, going on the theory that her visit precluded any exchange of amenities by post. Accordingly I thus far have had no occasion to mention anything about any European trips or anything about her impending May hejira to Manhattan. She told J. H. she and her husband and the children were going to Yellowstone this summer, and at supper she told Nina she was expecting to spend a couple of weeks at Melrose this summer, too. I sincerely hope the Yellowstone trip may be effected, and a cruise in the Yellow Sea would be fine, too, for all I care. Being as erratic as a chipmunk, she probably doesn't know herself what impulse will strike her next, but I am hoping whatever ones come to fruition, they may not be the ones inclining in this direction. Of course there isn't the slightest chance of her passing a couple of weeks here, for she would be so bored by the end of the first day that she would trump up some excuse for flying out of here before a second dawn ever overtook her.

I found the air at Arenbourg wonderfully bracing this morning, so delightfully cool for my weed chopping expedition on which I was bent. In view of the continued low temperatures, the persimmons seem to be awaiting a resurgence of spring before putting out much new growth, and so the new graftings appear dormant as yet. I am hoping the hot weather promised for the week end may set them astir.

And now I must up and away for a little turn to Arenbourg before folding up my beard, and it is time for me to get going, for the new moon at this moment is poised on the brow of the Montrose hills and before I make it back will probably have beaten me to bed....

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Friday, April 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

According to my calendar, Spring is a month old, but today it really was convincing, what with the thermometer in the 80's, and a balmy humid breeze blowing straight in from the direction of the Gulf.

It was one of those unsatisfactory days, however, after which one seems weary with having accomplished little at which one can point with pride. Still I guess a few things were undertaken, even if little appears to show for the effort.

One thing I did do at Yucca which satisfies me, however, and that was to add a new note to my boudoir. For ever so long I have had a colonial piece of fire arms, weighing Heaven knows how much, and only today did I find a place for it, - slap over my door. It is one of those old, old rifles one pushed the powder into through the 7 foot barrel, with lead and wadding after it, and then knocked yourself into the middle of next week when you pulled the trigger, the kick on those ancient pieces was so terrific. I had been pulling around through some old lumber in one of the ancient barns when I stumbled over an old timey powder horn, contrived from the cow with the crumpled (I hope I spelled that crumpled) horn, and thus, turning up the ammunition department, I decided it was high time to do something about the old flint lock piece it self, and so now it hangs above my chamber door, the powder horn suspended just below it, and while it lacks all the verve of a 1930 sawed off shot gun, still it does seem to have a harmony that goes along alright with the mud walls and barred windows of Yucca.

I also discovered a huge old oxen yoke, with a big old rusty iron ring still attached, and I strung that up on the gallery, for no other reason that it somehow made me think of Coin-Coin and the type of horse power which must have obtained in her days when Yucca was young.

Some Dallas bankers were here this afternoon, and two of them asked me if the yoke, which delighted them, was for sale. I smiled wearily and wagged my head horizontally. One of them said:

"We want you to come to Dallas to visit us anyway, and

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when you start, you remember to bring that big old yoke with you, for many an oil millionaire in Dallas would trade you a well for the thing."

How unimaginative some bankers are, and what flights of exaggeration they can take on occasion.

And speaking of Coin-Coin, I am sending along what came to hand today from Mrs. Holloman. My second secretary didn't seem to read the typed stuff very readily, and I gather there must be a lot of Holloman renditions from hand written French in the stuff. Neither he nor I felt much like wading through the stuff, and so I am not quite sure of what it covers, but I assume it must have to do with several births, probably beginning with Coin-Coin's children.

I didn't bother to run through the synopsis of the Yucca-Melrose Abstract, which is unquestionably correct in every detail, what with Lawyer Holloman being so meticulous. But regardless of its probably dullness, I thought you might like to have it for your scrapbooks. If you should ever make a copy of the birth records, I should be glad to have a copy for my scrapbook sometime or other, but I don't care when, and if never it will probably not be missed, for I can always consult with you if I need some point or other, and it seems to me I always get information directly from you in spite of the intervening miles with ten times the speed I ever acquire any I search for through the elusive services of others slap on the spot.

And all of this must have a depressing note of some kind. I suppose it stems from the fact that I borrow a half dozen cheap wine glasses from Celeste to guzzle the bankers, and one of the glasses was broken, and that depressed me, although the pattern is an open one and can be obtained readily in town. Having a mania for washing my glasses in oceans of soap suds and boil water rinses, I seem to be forever smashing up my stuff, and today was one of those moments when my supply was approaching the vanishing point. I can't think why the breaking of one such glass belonging to another should depress me, and Celeste was sweet as pie about the business, but still I regretted the episode.

I almost forgot to say that the ladies returned home last night after a most successful frolic in the Crescent City, it all turned out so Harper's Bazaar.

A bright spot in the late afternoon occurred when three friends of Mrs. and passed this way, one a Baptist, one an Episcopalian and one a Catholic. One seeing the Chapel, the Baptist and the Catholic ladies, a minute apart, but without the other knowing it, asked if a moment might be spent alone in the Chapel. Naturally I liked that, and they both agreed your gift dominates the whole place.....

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Sunday, April 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How grand to have your nice fat letter of Tuesday in Saturday's post.

It is good to have these elegant vignettes of the local scenes, and particularly those in which you are playing a part. And I am so glad you were able to get to Carnegie for the Anderson concert. I love the titles you mentioned as being your favorites, and I am hoping one or more of them may have been included in her program.

If chance favors, and my secretary should pass this way tonight, I want to open the armoire and run through your letter again, for there were several points I want to touch on, but shall do so at a later sitting. I am particularly interested, too, in what you have to say about the points touched on in my letter to Mrs. Holloman regarding the Mason matter. I shall include the idea or comparison which you approved, when the article reaches the boiling point. I shall be glad to have particulars from the Duke publication concerning the same subject. I should prefer you to keep the magazine for your eventual Americana collection, should you be able to jot down the salient points from it for me. If the advent of the tanker and all, however, puts unusual pressure on your time and energy at the moment, you might send the magazine along and I shall return it in due time, although the excerpts would suit me as well, for then I wouldn't have to bother prodding la Holloman about returning the same to me for return to you. She seems so dilatory about returning this although is perfectly responsible, I believe.

It has been a hurly-burly week end, with everybody passing this way and few if any gaining much.

I was delighted to see the lady doctor who passed by this afternoon to chat with me for a while before the American Legion blew in. It seems the Worsleys have purchased a two acre plot of ground a couple of miles above Watchitoches and are expecting to build on a little lake that has been carved out there.

It seems there has been something of a bust up between the Aswells and the Worsleys, much to Dr. Eleanor's regret, for she is very fond of the Aswells. The split came not over money affairs, although the fact that the Aswells are broke and money paid by the Worsleys on property, to be applied to a site for a Worsley dwelling, will probably always cause embarrassment on the part of the Aswells, since the money advanced to them as a personal loan was to be applied on the property in the Aswell name, but when taking title was advanced, it turned out the property was already so heavily mortgaged that there was no financial consideration due the owners.

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I also learned that one of our local Melrose priests, Father Lucy, is a mental case, which possibly accounts for his unusual briskness in tearing about the countryside on his fine motorcycle, which among other things and dones of brass and do-dads, has no less than three headlights on the contraption. By comparing notes, we confirmed our long standing opinions that Ile Brevelle Church is, indeed, a sub-tropical Siberia for recalcitrant members of the order of the Holy Ghost.

Our conversation was broken into when pilgrims came, and the latter were followed by a couple of hundred American legionnaires and wives, after which arrived several people under the wing of the Alcotts, half sister of Mrs. Cloutier, and as they pulled out, a flock of people under the guardianship of Mrs. George Sutton pulled in, and Dr. Rand, bearing many items of food, I guess, which, come to think of, I haven't examined as yet, but I had scant chance to say more than howdy, as people from the sugar cane country arrived, followed by....but what's the use.

But in view of such circumstances, you will readily appreciate why my brain is foggy and I should relish the services of a secretary. And speaking of the latter, my 2nd secretary, "urrel", didn't appear the other evening, and on inquiring about his absence on the following day, he explained he had gone home right after plantation work, as his eye was worrying him, itching and "such like". He said he tried putting some soap in it to wash away the itching but that made it itch only the more. Then he remembered he had a small bottle of iodine, and after putting that in his eye it seems as though the itching let up. He still has his eye, too, and marvelous to say, can apparently still see with it. Frankly I haven't the vaguest notion what a concentrate of iodine might do to the optics, but I should imagine it might be a little rough.

My weekend was further confused by the presence at a nearby camp, - Mr. Harding's, - of Mme de Montespan. The merchant planter spoke of her presence to me Saturday day afternoon, and I assumed she might pass by this way, but fortunately she did not, and I made no move to spread any hospitality by dropping by the camp, although I did recommend that the lady be advised not to pass this way at any time on Sunday, since there is no need of the present mistress of Melrose and the maitresse du roi bumping into each other half way between the front gate and Yucca.

I intended saying in my last letter that you might advise me if you notice any particularly striking omissions from the Church records forwarded on Friday or Saturday, those transcribed by Mrs. Holloman. I am casting about for the dates covering M. and Mme. Thomas Metoyer, and if any wives or husbands of the children do not appear in the list, I might still be able to get particulars from such olsters as Joe Rocque, etc, now in their 80's and 90's. But let me break off, for I am positive this letter must be unusually hodge-podge, reflecting my own hurly-burly after such a full up, hot summer's "day of rest".....

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Monday, April 24th, 1950.

Memorandum: And so, according to my aerial grapevine, it snowed in Paris, poured in New York, while at Melrose all day a pin-point drizzle gave moisture, perfectly administered, to cotton fields and the Arenboug children alike. The weather remains warm tonight and the sky partly overcast, so today's heavy dew will provide a maximum of benefit throughout the neighborhood.

What with the elements being thus in abundance, I busied myself under cover for the most part. A game index finger lent persuasion to puttering, too. I burned the thing the other day and I hit these keys haltingly, using my middle finger to double for itself and the index. It's a slow business and will explain the brevity of this note.

But I had fun, nevertheless, rigging up the Melrose tapestry or the Yucca Gobelin or whatever. I think I mentioned a couple of years back that Clemence contrived an extraordinary scenic quilt which in this patchwork of white pieces, violent reds, greens and blues, incorporated rough suggestions of Melrose, Yucca, the African House and so on. I investigated the article today and found that the somewhat gaudy design did not lend itself advantageously for a bedspread, since the individual pieces tended to obscure the whole composition as a pictorial item. Accordingly I tried it out as a mural decoration and discovered it looked very well on the gallery facing the "White Garden", in the blank space between the windows of my boudoir and living room. And so I tacked the "Arras" to a wooden poll, attaching the latter to wires suspended from the ceiling. The splash of color is rather nice and the child-like primitive quality of the handiwork harmonizes pleasantly with the simplicity of the old gindstone and ancient iron sugar cauldron in its immediate foreground. Dust in the atmosphere will shortly tone down the whites and reds, while the light from an intense Louisiana sun will fuse the whole spectrum into a pleasing inter-twining of strang color combinations and stranger designs.

To my surprise, I kept awake long enough last night to finish the Skinner "Family Circle". I like it. Since the family consisted of three, however, I am not sure "circle" was the happiest choice to describe the group, but since it was an harmonious combination of people, "triangle" could scarcely have been used without introducing a false impression. A good title, it seemed to me, struck me as I read the last page, but I forgot it in my dreams.

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Tonight I shall have a go at Max Eastman's *The Enjoyment of Poetry*, read by your friend, Alexander Scourby. I am under the impression this is a collection of essays which I think I shall like. I heard Eastman say once that practical people and poetical people differed in this respect, --that the practical knew where they wanted to go and how to keep every other consideration than how to get there out of their minds, with no satisfaction ever experienced since the attainment of one goal left them incapable of enjoying it but rather automatically provided another point to be stretched for, whereas the poetical were interested less in the goal than the journey and so had more fun along the way, without perhaps ever attaining anything, culminating in the end, by being equal to the practical souls who, after they once had arrived, were never able to admit it, or even recognize it, since the wish or aspiration was still shone from one more hill like the House with the Golden Windows.

You will love the cultural calibre (probably with one l) as revealed by a remark made this morning by one of the wives of accompanying the American Legionnaires. She, it seems, is connected with the Welfare Office in town, and this morning, according to Mrs. Coombs to passed this way for a minutes on her way to Alexandria this afternoon, had much to say about her trip of exploration up and down Cane River yesterday. Mrs. Coombs asked her if she had been included on the tour, and the response was affirmative, with the elaboration that some man had showed them "a lot of funny looking buildings". She asked Mrs. Coombs if she had ever been here and Mrs. Coombs admitted she had and was also acquainted with the man who showed them about.

The woman asked where in the neighborhood I lived, since none of the houses appeared to be occupied. Mrs. Coombs told her I occupied the house where the big picture of Augustin Metoyer hung. But this the woman doubted on two scores,

first, "because he didn't tell us he lived in that house", and second, "it must have been some other man anyway, because the one who showed us through wasn't dressed up at all like rich people who live in houses like that".

Don't you love that.

Obviously I must get me some peacock feathers, or at the very least, the tail of a turkey gobbler.

So turns the world and I am still puzzled as to what miracle it is that makes Democracy work.....

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Tuesday, April 25th, 1950.

Memorandum: Missed Belwara's visit, soon she was still

A lovely night and I write a little later than usual, for I fell asleep in my chair at 6 and have just awakened at 11. I know not if any of my elusive secretariat passed this way or not. A fairly heavy mail still rests here unopened before me. I should imagine if either or both of my sturdy assistants had peered in at me, they would have awakened me by a bit of window tapping, - but one never knows, for perhaps they would assume it better not to disturb me.

It is pleasant to report that my ailing index is well on the mend and by the morrow I should be able to fly along at normal speed again. And that will be well, for I notice some personal letters that may require responses, --Friend Postell, Waco Helen, Atlanta Miss Nellie, Norman Dora and so on.

I think what wrecked me this afternoon was the appearance about 5 p.m. of John Gibson of Montgomery who brought a man for a tour. John is Annie's husband, and hasn't a bit of sense. He provides one bit of comic relief, however, for he always does all the explaining of things, emphasising whatever he fancies important which usually turns out to be the new faucet on a water pipe or the protruding end of a pipe, left there by oil drillers a year or so ago. His flight into the historical field is arrestingly imaginative, in witness whereof I cite his explanation of the big house to his friend, pointing out some unevenness in the bricks and explaining that the house was formerly a monastery which, I know not how in his mind, accounted for certain worn places in the brick pillars.

Clemence came to see me at noon, accompanied by her big old black German police like dog. The presence of the latter set my mind to turning on the mystery of how animals so frequently reflect the attitude of their mistresses toward other animals. I thought of the General's wife in particular and how she dislikes cats and how her old bull dog instinctively manifests a "mad" whenever he sees a cat, and how the one time dachhund of Mrs. Rand reflects that lady's dislike of the feline world, and naturally I puzzled and pondered over the possible reasons why some people can only like one type of animal, approaching a fixation, while feeling impelled at the same time to loath another type, and how this somehow gets fixed into the mind of the animal which chances to be the object of adoration. Grandpa chanced to be stretched out at my feet when Clemence and

her big old canine companion arrived. Old Sheppard paused momentarily on reaching the gallery, and then, as by some sixth sense, realized all was well, and came trotting slap over to Grandpa and me, nosed my leg a little and licked my hand once, and then, putting his his head along side Grandpa's front paw and neck, gently sprawled beside us, both animals completely relaxed and in harmony with each other, Grandpa stirring only sufficiently to rub his nose along Sheppard's jaw, and then going back to sleep in infinite contentment and security.

The present year is likely to be remembered in these parts as having been scant in winter and scarce in spring, for the mildness of February has continued its thermometer readings up to this point, with the constant parade of cold masses of air from the Rockies bringing the temperature curve for April precisely in duplication of that of the average for February weather in this section. Monday's warmth and humid qualities varied little during the night by about 8 this morning, through cloudless skies, rolled down another cold mass of air, keeping the thermometer steady in the lower 70's all day, in spite of the brilliant sunshine, which, without the cold air, would have skyrocketed into the upper 80's, I suppose. Tonight, at 11, the thermometer stands at 45, and the cotton is likely to catch pneumonia or whatever, but vegetation on our side of the fence is profiting by the mildness of noon and will not be effected unfavorably by these midnight dips.

Sunday, a week ago, Eugene, the clerk, and his wife, went into the country and picked a heap of mayhaws which they converted into jelly, and this morning I was presented with a pint jar of the stuff, which was excellent. I know not how to spell mayhaw, but if the spelling is anything like the pronunciation, the above will do. I believe the mayhaw is a member of the hawthorne family, growing on shrubs some 51 or 20 feet high, and the whole bristling with thorns. In fact, I rather suspect it may be the same thing as the sloe from which I brewed my famous wine of a year or so back which Aurellia found so strongly suggestive of that delicious hog-wash she had enjoyed so much when a child when she and Bessie would revel in the spring water of the hills where the hogs had wallowed. But there was nothing hog-wallow-ish about the mayhaw jelly, and I am bound to get some additional particulars about it. For one thing, I must ask if it be true that the modern way to cover jelly with parafin is to place the same in the bottom of the jar, pouring the hot jelly in on top of it, whereupon the stuff instantly rises and forms a film that seals out the air at the top. Sounds remarkable. - if it works.....

Wednesday, April 26th, 1950.

Another lovely sunny day, with a minimum of contending with pilgrims and a maximum of energy expended on the end of a weed cutter.

Notes from Carolyn and Helen, indicating they will be here Sunday night or Monday, which neatly eliminates the usual Sunday hurly-burly, and I shall hold the thought the weather may be fine so they may secure a goodly number of photographs.

A note from Robina indicates she is heading out for Dallas for the Opera on Saturday and Sunday, and I wish I knew where Helen intends staying, for she, too, is spending those days in Dallas for the same purpose. These two ladies have never met but eventually they will, and I expect they will hit it off pretty well together, for they are both all wool, and both of them are possessed of that rare accomplishment, - of which Carolyn seems to have none, --dependability.

In the gardening section, I am delighted that the gourds seem to be off to a flying start. I may have mentioned the General purchased some seed in town for me when here at Easter time, and I got them into the ground on Good Saturday, which, according to local lore, is precisely the day to plant gourds and watermelons if one expects to produce a good crop. The idea seems basicly false to me, what with Easter flying around the calendar the way it does, but the chill of these past weeks doesn't seem to have held up germination and I assume we may have something of a crop this year. Wrens and warblers seem to like the smaller ones as framework for their nests, and once or twice I have had cardinals who seemed to find comfort in some of the larger ones. Mrs. Rand is forever making table decoration do-dads with every type of seed, gourd, weeds and heaven alone knows what not, and if my Easter planting has something by way of results along about November, I shall give her a flock of the things while Clemence and I will probably stir up some kind of a huge cluster of the various shaped numbers so suspend somewhere against the mud wall of the Chapel, which might given an extra rural note to the place, don't you think so.

With May not too far in the distance, I am surprised the grandiflora magnolias are so far behind this year. Except for a few big explosions on the top most branches of the oldest tree, there seems to be slight likelihood we shall have any excess before the middle of the month when

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little Miss Alberta is scheduled to appear, paint pot in hand, to record them in canvas. One of the most distressing things in this world, so far as across the fence is concerned, is the fear a few blossoms may not be available a week from tomorrow when some kind of a bridge game is on the docket. Rome sizzles, so to speak, while the grandifloras stand pat.

How wonderful it would be, - and yet how awful, if the biggest worry in our lives hinged on whether a grandiflora would explode a week from Thursday.

A little delegation from the Little River school came to wait upon me this afternoon, bearing a message and invitation to attend a frolic out that way tonight. It is a lovely night and would have been pleasant, but what with half a dozen other things cooking, plus the fact that I shall have to be out that way next Monday night, I decided I had better decline. In her note regarding the Little River gumbo as of next week, Helen referred to it as the party in the back country, which, I thought almost as clever as phrases turned neatly by one Lydia Lee of Lyme, so the secretaries, not being invited, will never dream of localities involved. I reckon I may have mentioned prior to this late date that Dee-Dee is giving a gumbo, and since several of his children will be present, - Little Robert, with whose picture you are acquainted before the sun dial, and Log, his son-in-law, and Peter and perhaps six or 8 other gentlemen, together with their wives and offspring, so that the gathering, a bonif gather they do, should provide quite a "family droop", and quite aside from the pleasure of tasting the excellent cooking, there will be a fine opportunity, I think, to obtain some night pictures of the countryside by still sets, and, I hope, some interiors of the various family members, which eventually, I somehow feel, might be of unique interest, and particularly as the remoteness of any place on earth, together with its ancient customs, gradually vanishes. What with Monday tending to follow both Saturday night and Sunday, it will not be the most advantageous time in the world for a gathering of this sort, but one must strike while the iron is hot, so to speak, and thus I have accepted the invitation regardless.

I am frankly surprised Carolyn took my "But definitely No" with such good grace. Well do I recall when others were concerned, how they would write, asking that they be told frankly if it might be convenient for them to come with guests, and when told that frankly it would not, they would be fulminating in their beard at me for having taken them at their word.

And thus the world turns round, and tomorrow is Knipmayer Day and I believe the hands are scheduled to entertain at their camp, but, assuming I receive an invitation, I shall decline, for I have a heap of stuff I want to stir around with at Arenbourg, and water festivals at the camp will have to wait. Per aps next Sunday I may not at least have the

American Legion on my lap.....

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Thursday, April 27th, 1950.

A cold air mass hovers over Little Rock, but is not expected to make its way any closer, what with 15 mile an hour Gulf breezes wearing the invader out. In these parts the thermometer jumped from the 50's this morning to the 80's by noon, and parasols of gauze filtered the sun and husbanded the moisture.

With a helper, I decided to do much hoeing at Arenbourg, but what with the promise of cloud coverage for the afternoon and tonight, I decided gobs of watering would lend encouragement to a heap of things, including the grandiflora especially, for they are putting out much new growth and I believe in all the encouragement they can take when they are so obviously in the mood to increase their stature. And so buckets of water flowed and flooded, and the sun didn't come out much and so tonight everything from bottom most root to upper most leaf must be all astir.

The incoming mail continues rather heavy and I seem to be running behind considerably for me, what with items that appear likely to be of scant interest still unopened as from Tuesday.

The enclosure from Edgar E. Stern, with its attached letter from Stanley Arthur isn't of great moment, but one does learn a bit of additional data from every communication, if would seem. If you would care to keep the Arthur notation, I should be glad if you would copy for me what he has to say about Joseph Mason, you to keep the item I am sending, if you please, and with me to eventually receive the copy you make.

The letter from Caroline Dormon contained the gourd seed she referred to. It was kind of her to give instructions as to planting, but nevertheless characteristically dizzy on her part, since she knows I have been raising gourds for years while she hasn't been. In fact I have been supplying houses for Briarwood beatified inhabitants for years, and I am wondering how dizzy Miss Dormon thought I ever contrived to bring forth said gourds. Another point which is mildly hilarious is the fact that those I planted at Easter time are already up and flourishing, which means they will probably be heavy with fruit long before the Dormon seed get to doing much business. Among other things, "Carrie is a sight!"

4205

A letter from Miss Kate Perkins indicates that she is in a panic, not having heard from me in a couple of weeks and from Sister in a couple of months. I do try to write her at least once a week, but I reckon I must have let a couple slide by, although I do recall that last Sunday, - a letter she probably receive after posting one to me, was written in spite of the American Legion crush, which certainly ought to entitle me to at least one skip.

Mrs. Holloman sent me a big old photostat of a document which appears to have been neatly slit into two parts, apparently in transit. It is in French, and if you don't mind, I shall eventually send it along, since it is from the Matchitoches records. I asked Dr. Knipmayer to struggle with the opening paragraph, heavily laden with all the verbiage of the period. I gathered from what he read with some difficulty that it has to do with somebody's slave who stole a turkey, or s me such. I believe the thing is dated 1766, or thereabouts. If this be true, one of the most interesting things about the document,-- which is a ridiculous statement for me to make, since I know nothing beyond the first few lines, is the fact that the form used by the representatives of the King of Spain in Louisiana seem to be those used by representatives of the King of France. For if I caught the date correctly, - 1766, Spain was in control of Louisiana, as and after 1763, but the legal document mentions his "Most Christian Majesty", - the title always employed by the King of France, as you will recall, whereas the King of Spain was always known as "His Most Catholic Majesty".

I don't know when I shall get this item into the mail, for a dozen demands may prevent me from getting it posted for the next few days. If a translation doesn't appear too difficult, it might be nice to have. But if circumstances do not make such a rendition convenient at the moment, please just set the thing aside, for Mrs. Holloman had it photostated on a hunch that it was something bearing upon Cane River lore, whereas, from this first glance, I see nothing to bear out such an assumption.

I had expected a flock of Rands today, but it seems they aren't coming until tomorrow. Somebody or other from the college telephoned to ask if they might have the afternoon of May 9th. In the closer foreground, the Rural Electrification Administration is being entertained by the President of the Valley Electric, - which means J. H. is going to have open house at one of the camps between here and the bridge, on Saturday night. Until just the shortest time ago, I assumed the Valley Electric covered merely this section of Cane River, but it seems it runs from someplace up Shreveport way to haven knows how far South. But no matter where it runs, I, personally, run for cover when first dark comes down on Yucca, and Saturday night's party will have to make it without any moral support on my part. So things whirl, and now I must turn to doing some mail....

4206

Friday, April 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I am entranced.....

Your most excellent letter to hand, giving some hint of the possible blessings impending for May.

You must be as busy as a bee. I shall write but briefly to afford you time otherwise spent on reading.

My telephone, Matchitoches 4901 (four nine zero one) appears on an accompanying slip for your convenience. The most favorable hours for reaching me are 9, 11 and 5. Any time between will be alright, too, for I shall forego Arenbourg to be at home base.

There are three extensions on the local telephone. I shall advise when you call as to whatever measure of privacy may exist, and it is possible it might be complete.

I should think a card to Celeste, saying you foresee the possibility of a jump to Mexico and if possible you will drop by Melrose, either going or coming and that it will be nice if you may establish contact.

I have included Miss Alberta's New Orleans address, although she may possibly be here when you are in the Crescent City. If you have any choice as to hotels there, the Montheleon Hotel on Royal is the one patronized by the conservative gentry, the Roosevelt being more modern and nouveau (nouveau).

I am distracted by a huge blow from the South which has just blown down most of the bananas on the front gallery, carried off my garden rake, hoe, weed cutter, etc. Branches are hurtling through the air but the sundial still stands.

I shall not write you after this memo until I have heard further news from you. If plans go according to hopes, I shall next week advise the Rands of your possible advent in their city. I have included their telephone on the accompanying list. They will be delighted to take care of you and to see you get here or are conveyed to proper transportation facilities.

3034

4207

I waited to pen these lines after the storm, curiously enough a big breeze without any rain, but it has been carrying on for a couple of hours, and so I delay no longer. The electric current, of course, has been cut for hours, and as I write in complete darkness, you will forgive whatever odd margins, etc., characterize this note.

Another point regarding the Rands.....in the event that circumstances should warrant staying over night in Alexandria, feel free to stay with them rather than Hotel Bentley, should they invite you, for they will always be entranced to offer you accommodations and it will be a distinct pleasure for them to entertain.

As between now and the next time I write, I shall keep a brief day-to-day account of the changing scene, and pleasantest of all will be the day I can jot down the arrival of Miss Lydia Lee of Lyme.

Don't try to write in the mean time, unless it be but a post card to advise of your progress, for you will be much too busy to take Underwood in hand, and everything will be so perfect if you make mental notes to take up when we eventually establish direct contact.

Again may I repeat my entranced state of mind, and the twister outside seems tame as contrasted with the happiness your letter of today has brought me....

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Memorandum:

Saturday, April 29th, 1950.

A strong wind, blowing from the South from 11 last night until 2 this morning, flattened the bananas along the front gallery, and blew down a couple black locust trees on the Arenbourg line near the terrace. One crashed over a young magnolia, breaking part of it. Fine drizzle all day. I did not attend R. E. A. party at Fugabou camp.

Sunday, April 30th, 1950.

Cloudy and humid. Dr. Rand called in morning. I promised to have coffee at the camp immediately after dining with J. H. and Celeste. Arrival of pilgrims, however, cancelled visit. Mr. Partridge, who is kin to Caroline Dornon, came with party of 4. He is an architect at Lake Charles, La., and is on commission to build an African House, after the manner of Yucca, and accordingly devoted much time to taking measurements. On leaving, he expressed the opinion that the unique quality of the colonial buildings here merited putting them under a glorified bell jar.

Later Mrs. Rand, and Pattison, Mrs. Gordon Randolph and Zelma came, bringing an elegant salad and a black chocolate cake. Forecast for tomorrow is showers.

Monday, May 1st, 1950.

It began raining at 10 this morning. Log came by to say if it didn't rain any more, we would be able to get to Little River tonight. But the rain continued, increasing in volume. At noon Peter dropped by. He said he had heard something like a roar off Cloutierville way around 11. Later at dinner, the clerk told me a tornado had torn things up in the Cloutierville-Derry section, demolishing a colored school and injuring several children. Around 3:30, Helen arrived, the heavens still teaming. As I greeted her at the gate after her long jaunt from Texas, Helen's fellow visitor, Carolyn, up from New Orleans, rolled in. It was raining so hard, however, Carolyn didn't recognize Helen's car and Helen didn't recognize Carolyn, and it was only after I followed Carolyn half way through the gardens that I caught up with her and realized her identity. Log came at 5 to say the bridge across the bayou had been washed away. We had a pleasant evening at Yucca with 4 or 5 friends, but regretted our inability to do anything about partaking of the goose gumbo that had been prepared beyond the pecan orchards, at the moment under water. Tonight a terrific cannonade goes on in the heavens with but a mild breeze stirring and only a normal fall of rain. The garden is under two or three inches of water.

8034

4209

Tuesday, May 2nd, 1950.

It was still rain this morning at dawn. During the night gusts of wind had flattened buildings in Montgomery to the East and up-rooted trees from Bermuda to Natchitoches to the North, and torn up thing around to the West. Electric current was off until noon. Carolyn and Helen "lay long", passing by Ucca around 10:45. They ran down to see Celestine after dinner, but finding her not at home, departed their separate ways around 2, with n'er a camera having clicked once during their visit. Helen left five dollars for me to give Log for the slaughtered goose tha was never tasted, but I put it in an envelope and mailed it to her, for the gifts she brought by way of clothing will more than compensate for the goose and some consideration should be given the one who travels such distances and so generously provides for local inhabitants, not only in clothing but groceries of various types as well. A heavy post, including a neat package and two letters from Miss Lee and a flock of other first class mail, none of which has been opened, the package being saved for a week hence and the letters until the washed out secretaries appear. Tonight a brave moon sails through a cloud flecked sky, as though to remind one of what the weather might have been last night but wasn't.

Wednesday, May 3rd, 1950.

Hot and humid. The senior class of the Natchitoches Colored Trade School asked if they might make a tour. They could, and they came, about 50 strong, at 2. It was so different from the American Legion, I liked it. A letter from little Miss Alberta, asking if she may come on May 11th. A letter from Nina McKinnis, saying little Miss A. advises her she is to be at Melrose on the 11th for a visit and that she hopes Nina will come, too. What a remarkable lady is little Miss A. Funy dropped by for a brief chat. He says Mrs. Rand is still worried about the Chapel, and said she would forgive me, however, for contriving such a thing if I would let Funy steal the Cane River Gobelin from the gallery at Yucca one of these dark nights. Mails heavy Laurel Hill, Devereux, etc. I'm bogged down wit correspondence what wit too much time at Arenbourg to pay much attention to Underwood. Telephone communication is still cut with outside world. Accordingly ordered some extra copies of the Picayune of May 7th, thinking Miss Lee might not be in touch with her usual source of supply and might want a couple of copies of the Black Swan article for her scrapbook.

Invitation from Little River school to attend their final exercises tomorrow night. Think I'll send a couple of chickens for their gumbo instead of going on my own hook, remaining at home to get caught up on stuff.

4210

2nd sheet.

Thursday, May 4th, 1950.

Arenbourg at dawn, with a good breeze to cut the heat and humidity seemingly at least. Pilgrims from Dallas, friends of Helen's about 8 a.m. Rounded up men to get magnolias grandiflora for Celeste's bridge party and somehow got off some mail before 9. Thence to Arenbourg where Peter with tractor was doing the terrace, and back in time for the Knipmayers. Dinner at 12, delegation from colored school at 12:30, Arenbourg at 1 with Andy, bath at 2:30, Ora coming as I was rising from the foam, bringing me the Alpina folio of Images de Versailles. She is heading a Committee to get an organ for the Presbyterian Church in town. Must send her something tonight. Back to Arenbourg and back by 5 to rip off beard before supper. Rosalyn Aswell came before I had finished. Not much news but lots of talk about reading, especially thrillers, and she mentioned Brighton Rock as to her liking. It sounded pretty gruesome from her review. Celeste came at 6:30, bringing me a piece of cake from her party, which reminded me I must write Mrs. Gordon Randolph, taking her for the huge chocolate cake she brought me on Sunday. Andy came at 6:45, bringing back tools used at Arenbourg. Paid him and returned to Celeste and her account of the party and how she and her mother had squeezed in a confession at church, following the card cutting contest or whatever "thumping your partner's ace" is called.

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4211

Friday, May 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your elegant air mail with the Mason enclosure today, and my sincerest thanks to you for giving me particulars regarding your altered schedule. I shall continue to send Memoranda until the 12th, as you recommend, and even if one or two should be late in arriving, I am certain they would be held for your return.

I spoke with Dr. Rand about the possibility of your advent in Alexandria sometime during May. He was just as kind as ever and recommended that I advise you to telephone them whenever you reach Alexandria and that they will be delighted to put you in a car and whisk you to Melrose, or, if the time element were such that you would prefer to remain over night, they will be entranced to have you with them. They are lovely people, as you will discover, and quite aside from the pleasure your presence in their home will afford them, you will at the same moment provide them with an added excuse to get into the big road and head out in this direction, and as some of them are forever coming or going, this added excuse will delight them.

It occurs to me at this moment that it might be well for you to have a good Shreveport address, just in case the plane should by some chance set itself down in that city. You know Robina Denholme, 401 Commercial Building, Shreveport, La.

I do not know her office number but her home telephone at 825 Wilkinson Avenue is Shreveport 7 - 5775. I may not mention your possible advent to her, - or I may, - but in either case, you may be sure you will receive a most hearty welcome. If she should not be free to drive you down here, she would most certainly put you on a bus or a plane. The bus should be taken to Natchitoches from whence you could telephone here and I would meet you, or you could take a plane from Shreveport to Alexandria where the Rands would have the red carpet out. I might add that there is a coolness between Mrs. Rand and Miss Denholme, and I seldom mention the name of the one in the presence of the other. I believe the coolness is on Madam Rand's side, induced perhaps, although I am not certain, by a vague regret that the "adam's friendship and mine was so steady in both directions, - Alexandria and Shreveport.

I foresee but one cloud on the horizon, the chance that the West Point graduate and his bride may be here from Germany during June or July but that will merely mean more people and that is all.

115A

4212

I had some clippings from the eneral today, but not any letter, due, no doubt, to the fact that he was probably pressed for time, having departed yesterday, I believe, for Churchill Downs for tomorrow's Derby. It is probable that on the return of the Junior member of the family, some time may be spent with her mother, where ever she lives, possibly Wasington or Chicago, and as the General is want to come here for the 4th of July, his son and heir may plan for a little visit here at that time, thus leaving us a mparatively free during June, I hope.

Little Miss Alberta usually stays here about 10 days, so I assume she will be back in New Orleans when you arrive. Her Myra Clarke Gains house and the patio is so old timey, it will be pleasant for you to visit it. The patio may be visited without contacting her, if circumstances, such as too many companions, might make it seem more adviseable to call on her personally at a subsequent go-round. I shall mention to her while here that Manhattan friends of mine may pass her way, but shall leave it vague, so that you may feel quite secure, no matter if you should find yourself therein company with other people.

I find it a coincidence indeed that in reality you will not be in New York when Sister blows in. I have heard nothing from her since her last visit here, and so know nothing of her plans. While on Shreveport ground again, however, let me mention that Nina McInness lives at 285 Wilkinson Avenue in that city, a number surprisingly confusing with Robina on the same street with the same digits in her address. In case you failed to contact one of these ladies the other would be within arm's reach, I am sure, and either would be enchanted to have you contat her. You might mention to Nin, should you see her, that Sister is not to be advised of your presence, assuming you wish to avoid the bag, I hope.

I suppose I shall think of other possibilities that may be touched on at subsequent sittings between now and the 12th, my final writing date. In the mean time, I shall ed make mental notes to include if any comes to mind.

It has been a hot busy day for me, much up and down the road to Arenbourg and too many pilgrims, not to mention Mrs. Holloman who spent most of the afternoon here and accomplished comparatively little. We didn't have an opportunity to run through the Duke Mason business and so I let her borrow it with the understanding she return it to me within the next couple of weeks.

I think of you so constantly, hoping that preparations for your impending holiday may not be so vast and involved that you will be tired out before you start. Do out corners all you can and try to get a bit of rest before heading out if you can. I

need scarcely add how entranced

115A

4213

Sunday, May 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I send this air mail by Celeste's suggestion.

Unimaginative simplicity is the word, and withal so wonderful.

I didn't see Celeste yesterday, but I dined with her and J. H. and Madam Regard today. After dinner, Celeste asked if I could give her a moment alone. Seated on the gallery, she confided to me she had wonderful news, -- a letter from you and that you.....but then she read the letter. It never has crossed her mind that I might have heard from you and so I let it all be a surprise.

She is perfectly enchanted at the prospect and has already made the most elaborate plans on how "to sleep you" during your visit. She said:

"First I thought Mother might sleep at the big house and Erna have her room here, and then, after speaking with J. H. about it, I decided it would be nice if she and I slept at the big house together, so she wouldn't be frightened, sleeping in that house all by herself....."

Shades of little Miss Alberta Ben Bolt.....

And after much talk and expressions of delight, she said she would write you an air mail and asked me if I wouldn't do so, too, just to be sure you would feel ever so welcome. So here I am.

But quite aside from all that, it is nice to know that she is almost as tickled as either of us about the prospect and probably by the time you arrive, Pat will be home from U. S. U. and the three of you can occupy the big house together.

The Rands were up today and asked me for dinner but I declined. Dr. Rand came over after dinner with some friends, and I rode back to the camp with them to chat for a little with Madam Rand. I told her of your impending visit, and she said to be sure to write you, she forgot to insist on an air mail, and to tell you she would be perfectly delighted if you will only telephone her on your arrival at the air port and that she will be delighted to pick you up and whisk you up here the minute your plane arrives, --unless you would like to spend some time with

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4214

them at home before coming up here. And what with the Doctor already having expressed his delight at the prospect of your visit, the red carpet, as you see, is all poised for the unrolling.

And so there you are on the threshold of your advent into the deep South, and may everything in between run along as smooth as silk. Undoubtedly little Miss Alberta will have long since returned to New Orleans by the time you reach Melrose, but how free we shall be of other guests or members of the family, only time will tell. Celeste brought up the matter of the S. G. juniors, and assumes they will not come until July, and that will be to the good, for the quieter it is during your visit, the better I shall like it, and the less the place suggests 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, the more restful it ought to be for you by way of change.

There is a chance that Carolyn and Helen may pass back this way early in June, to catch some of the shots they never did get early in May. But if they come, it will be but for one night, and the four of us could have fun together after the two of them had busied themselves with cotton culture during the day and you and I had had a good go at everything from scrapbooks to Arenbourg and back again.

It's going to be hot-hot by June, I suppose but the back gallery of Yucca will be pleasant enough, what with the joint efforts of a big old electric fan on the brick pavement and a swinging punka overhead.

It occurs to me you might want to find it convenient to send a package by Parcel Post directly here, should you have in mind a pair of heavy shoes or cotton stockings for the Arenbourg weeds or some kind of a odd frock for crouching about in, that you wouldn't care to toat all the way to New Orleans or wherever before reaching home base. And so I hope if such a move would be helpful, you will send anything you wish to me, and I shall hold it confidentially, naturally, and the same or whatever you wish added to it, can be sent back to 908 by parcel post from here, and at any time following your departure that is convenient. I am not very imaginative about plotting travel thoughts in advance, but I know you will feel quite free to make any arrangements along this line or any other, should they come to mind.

The Black Swan article wasn't quite so bad in today's Picayune as I had anticipated. Of course the thing was gummed up considerably with much eliminated by la-bag, and, in one place, I think I detect the stupid historical tampering of little Miss Alberta, of all people, but the important thing is that the article henceforth will be in print in the Picayune files for future readers to consider if they care to.

4215

Monday, May 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Hot and humid with a promise of more for the morrow. Not the vaguest suggestion of a gardenia in this neighborhood. Perhaps they are waiting for the first week in June, which would be ever so nice. Our surviving bush at Arenbourg holds several buds and before sunup tomorrow, I shall have a word with it, recommending it hold everything for another month, don't you think so.

Mrs. Combs, the lady Rudolph styles Brunhilda, passed this way today. She brought some things for some of my Little River friends, clothing her children had out-grown. I was glad to learn something about the present scuffle going on at Northwestern State College where charges and counter-charges have been flying thick and fast in the press, particularly of the Shreveport and New Orleans papers during the past week. With Dr. Combs on the faculty, word comes more direct than through the press, but in the present instance, it seems, the press has been comparatively mild. The President who has the backing of the Administration, and colleges in Louisiana are fearfully subject to politics, and to get back to the President, he appears to have stirred up animosity on all sides, not only as a pawn of Baton Rouge, but through lack of adroitness on his own part. But quite aside from his ineptitudes, he made a blunder the other day when he instructed one of the officers of a student organization to recall by letter an invitation the organization had extended to Mayor Morrison to speak at some college doings. The youth wrote one letter which the President asked to see, and not liking the hint it contained that the withdrawal of the invitation was due to politics, forced the youth to sign another. The youth did so, but added a post script and then mailed the letter in the sub station post office located on the college grounds. Sensing a post script might have been added, the President, it is said, gave instructions that the letter should be taken out of the post office by one of his assistants, which was done, and the post script accordingly discovered. But once a letter has been posted, of course, it is under the protection of Uncle Sam, and tampering with the mails is a pretty serious charge. And so the papers began beating the drums, and the college, at this last straw of strange doings by puppets out of strings worked from Baton Rouge, and the fat is in the fire. I guess the President's goose is cooked, any way it may be turned.

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I had a round with a coke bottle today that gave everyone in the store a start and didn't hurt me. I picked up two unchilled bottles from a case and I guess one of them, slightly nicking the other, was in such a frame of mind as to explode, for explode it did, and with an impressive detonation. I had need of a manicure anyway, and to assist, the flying glass shaved off about a quarter of an inch of finger nail as neatly as you please. The piece of glass, in no way deterred by such a minor obstacle, drove into the palm of my hand, but as the splinter was large, I pulled it out easily enough and in a few minutes, my hand had stopped bleeding and I could assure the managers on, frightened by the explosion, that nothing was amiss. Three or four times I have had coke bottles do odd tricks, but as these mishaps have always taken place in hot weather, I assume that the temperature is a contributing cause, bolstered, possibly, by an unusually high charge of carbonated water, to boot. It seems to me I did once hear of someone being knocked cold by the top of the bottle which, in exploding, struck the man in the temple, but that is the only fatality I can recall, although every summer brings at least one report of the playfulness of this type of pop, and I reckon it does pay to handle the unchilled stuff with no delicacy must get further particulars about a witch doctor, taken up by the authorities not long ago, after a number of skulls had been found concealed about his cabin, or buried under his gallery. The Sheriff gave several to Dr. Combs for his laboratory and, on hearing I would be glad to have one to frighten pilgrims who are forever getting into places out of bounds, he sent one to me today by Mrs. Combs. She placed the skull on the floor of the car in front of the back seat, as she was driving to Alexandria alone, and was stopping off here to deliver it. Along the road, having completely forgotten the thing momentarily, she slowed down to give a lift to a colored woman and her little boy who were trudging along the dusty highway. In view of their much heralded fear of such objects, you may well imagine their consternation when, after they had climbed in and the car had started up, their eyes suddenly caught sight of the unexpected object at their feet. It seems to me this perfectly unimportant episode ought to supply the pattern for a splendid story. The time should be at midnight, of course, and perhaps the wife of a physician driving herself home from a smart soiree in the country, the lady in much evening gown, etc. Probably the husband who had accompanied her to the party had been suddenly summoned to an emergency thing during the evening, and after finally hoping to return to the party, had telephoned his wife he would not be able to make it, recommending that she have someone drive her home in their car. But the lady, accustomed to driving, and wishing to inconvenience no one, merely gets into the car, unmindful of the presence of the skull the doctor has forgotten on the floor in back, and so heads for home, when she is flagged down by a negro who for some reason has to get somewhere or other, possibly pursued by the Law or some such. And then, as he considers some form of violence, suddenly catches sight of the skull.....

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Tuesday, May 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Arenbourg, the Chapel of the Blessed Martin, Yucca, moi-meme, -- it's everybody's birthday, thanks to little Miss Lee of Lyme and I am hoping that in spite of the pressing demands of last minute preparations for her voyage, her day may have caught a measure of the reflected happiness which she bought to us.

Your air mail of the 5th came in this morning's post, and 30 million efforts on my part would not convey to you how happy I am to have your perfectly elegant letter. I marched to Arenbourg slap after dinner to consult with "the children" and see what would be next. It was a happy hour I spent there before having to gallop back.

I intended telling you to keep the Postell photostat but must have forgotten to mention it. When the wonderfully clear reproductions in your true hand came to me, I found they would be perfect for my scrapbook and I thought you might enjoy having the big one, but you can look for it again, if it fits in nicely with your arrangements for Cane River data.

And may I mention the Chapel of the Blessed Martin and in what perfect harmony the beautifully contrived iron work fits into the scene. I find their weight and material so substantial, and yet the design and lines so wonderfully wrought that they suggest a certain basic opulence that fits into the general tenor of the place better than anything else could possibly have done. They stand before the stained glass window on the white bench that temporarily serves as an altar. The contrast of the dark gleam of their metal stands out magnificently in contrast with the white tapers they support, and the entire unit appears to supreme advantage, thus placed before the brilliance of the red and the blue of the square panes. I think you are going to like them even as I loved them at first sight. No wonder Williamsburg put on its seal of approval.

And may I thank you, too, for giving me such a splendid account of "The Wisteria Trees" of which, of course, I had heard nothing. I am so glad you and the girl friend could spend such a pleasant evening together. Miss Hays seems to have brought forth another "The Cherry Orchard" and your kindness in giving the impression of the whole piece pleased me no end. I should imagine the balance between colored and white and the inter-play of racial personalities must have been particularly effective. The last time I saw

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"The Cherry Orchard" was at the 14th Street Repetoiry Theatre and, if memory serves, it was Eva LeGallienne and Nazimova dominating the thing. There was something awfully Slavic about their determination to get through to Moscow or where ever it was they were or were not going. I should imagine the Hayes treatments of going from the plantation on to New Orleans would be in quite a different vein and at once notalgic and lovely. Somehow your account was so splendid, it was almost as though I had been present with you and such a lovely picture of your evening's entertainment went along so nicely with the lovely card enclosed with the candelabra and the candles. What happiness your various manifestations of thoughtfulness have brought to me.

The clerk must have come down from town a little earlier than usual this morning, for he tapped on my door a little before 6, bearing a cake, - a chocolate one, his wife had baked for me. I reckon Celeste must have told him it was the day it was well in advance, but the gift was a surprise, for we don't visit back and forth, and I was entranced she remembered I liked chocolate.

Celeste and Madam Regard gave me one of those awning striped or striped red and white summer dressing gowns that can be tossed into the tub at any moment, if ever worn, which is also problematical.

After my return from Arenbourg at 2:30, I had to say No to a delegation for colored students from Minden, where ever that is, - up Shreveport way I guess. They should have written ahead for a tour of course, and what with an appointment made in advance with a flock of bags from the college, that schedule had to be maintained, of course. Picture my surprise, following the tour, when arriving on my back gallery where the tour ended and where I expected to toss them cokes, imagine my surprise, I repeat, when it was they would not only brought forth the cokes, but the biggest old birthday cake I ever had, a good 2 or 2 and a half feet across, and withal white with much name written on it in nasturtium colors and gay arrangements of flowers surrounding the cake itself but still resting on the plate, which was the biggest thing in galss since Dr. Hofstadter stirred up the Croning Glass eye. I suppose Celeste must have told the bags in advance that their tour coincided with my natal day, and that was alright, although I should have been as happy, had she not heralded it quite so far. Still it was a pleasant surprise, and the oddest thing about it was the fact that I didn't know and never had seen a single one of the 20 or 30 bags who were giving the collation. And so, when the tour was done and we all said Goodbye, I couldn't tell for the life of me who had been host and who had been guest. Of course there was tons of cake left, and so I removed the chocolate cake Eugene had brought me in the morning, reserving it for myself, and put a section of the other cake, equal in size to the plate, and thus was able to send cake up the road, even as it had come down in the morning. And so turns out the day, and colored friends came and cake was all over the place and candles burned in the C

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Wednesday, May 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Full summer and not much opportunity to labor with much zest during the major part of the day without melting a way to a grease spot.

Herr und Frau Combs dropped in this afternoon. They had been looking over the prospect of insects in the cotton along Cane River. He told me he thought they were good, what with a boll weevil suddenly hopping up on his windshield as they were driving across the broad Magnolia acres. It's certainly going to be bad if those things decide at long last to work on automobiles instead of cotton.

I think both of them are rather depressed about the outlook for education in the State. The New Orleans and Shreveport papers both carried additional blasts against the administration. At Baton Rouge, ex-Senator Fredericks stated that he proposed to appoint the Natchitoches College head for another season regardless. This gave the newspapers an opening, for such appointments are supposed to be made by an 11 man Board. It is said Fredericks is pretty much running Louisiana the way he pleases in his role as Executive Secretary to Governor Long who has been ill for a number of months. A politician, the ex-Senator has about as much vision as one would expect to find under a chip in the hill billy country. If it be true that people get the kind of Government they deserve, they surely Louisiana doesn't deserve much and is getting just about that amount.

The clerk and I dined alone today, what with no guests and no Henrys about. J. A. went to Memphis this afternoon and returns tomorrow, I believe. Monday was the day, as I recall, that the Wenks were threatening to go to New York, but I don't know them as I do, they may well have gone or not gone. I have heard nothing, either direct or indirect, from that quarter. I certainly hope Mina McInness didn't tell Sister of her intention to come to Melrose during little Miss A.'s visit. And speaking of the latter, scheduled to arrive tomorrow, we have heard nothing from her but she will eventually be telephoning from town probably, either tomorrow or Friday. Her inordinate ability to gum up her travels fills me with astonishment and admiration, for in spite of her vast preparations, she never makes a schedule and yet somehow or other manages to get through, in spite of everything. "A special God for fools and drunks", I suppose, and little Miss A. doesn't

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believe in stimulents, -- that's why she drinks a billion cups of coffee a day.

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I can't think why I am so far behind in my correspondence, but such seems to be the case. I note from Helen indicates she made it home alright but the route from here to Waco last week was fraught with many fallen trees and toppling telephone poles. Only God and the State Department probably knows where Carolyn may be. Helen said she got the impression that while Carolyn's job is interesting, it is inclined to be a bit on the lonely side, what with flying about the country as she does, and Helen says she will be glad when Carolyn settles down on her Marshall farm. So will I, for if ever I feel an impulse to drop her a line, I shall at least know where to address it.

Since Sunday quite a few pilgrims, none of whom I haven't chanced to know, have asked if they might see the portrait of The Black Swan. I am always surprised when people, and especially those not at home base, read such items in a newspaper. Perhaps I mentioned I got a letter off to time (with a bigger T), enclosing the article and pointing out the D. A. R. paradox. I never see that magazine, although it is on the local subscription list, but, should any reference be made to it in that periodical, I reckon I shall hear about it.

I think I forgot to say in yesterday's letter that you should have no worries about inconveniencing the Rands or fear of not finding them at home, for there is always somebody there, and as they usually get under full sail before dawn in the morning and never fold up before midnight, you aren't likely to disturb anybody; no matter what hour you may telephone 7532.

I am not certain, but I am under the impression Ed. Rand, his wife, Florence, and their daughter, Ellen Locket, are living with his parents at the moment. But in the event their telephone should be out of commission or some such, Dr. Rand's office number is in the telephone book and his secretary, Miss Dunbar, will set you straight. In view of your elegant letter of yesterday, I dropped Mrs. Rand a note, passing along the news that she would undoubtedly be hearing from you during the week of June 5th. You will of course feel just as free to accept their hospitality if, by chance, you should contact any of the children, for they are just as kind as the Rands, pere et mere, and will be delighted to take you from where ever your plane sets down to where ever. I am under the impression they are not far from the air port, too, and so you shouldn't have to wait long for them after telephoning.

Some midnight hued friends called late last night, we lighted the tapers in the Chapel and chatted for a while. It was so pleasant and somehow I felt that in spirit Lydia made the circle complete....

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One 7/9/50

Thursday, May 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A week ago when Ora dropped in to see me for a few minutes before attending the party next door, she asked my advise about how a letter should be contrived to the Estate of J. H. Henry, telling them the Presbyterian Church in Natchitoches, to which their mother belonged, was trying to raise money for an organ, and whether it should be on a personal basis, - the approach, or not. I recommended a straight business letter, and that was that.

In the following mail, however, I naturally sent her a little contribution. Hence the letter enclosed, and don't you think it kind of Lawyer Williams to want to weave a prayer-rug for our Chapel.

And another nice thing happened today. Before dawn or rather after dawn but before sunrise, as I was passing through the bamboo hedge of the White Garden, heading for Arenbourg, I saw an old negro couple rather fervently pass through the side gate into the White Garden and just a little hesitantly approach the back gallery, pause for a moment and then open the door to the Chapel and enter. Naturally I continued on my way to weeds.

On my return to Yucca a couple of hours later, I made my usual round of the Chapel, all properly closed and quiet. Only one thing was different, -- an old fashioned water glass, turned purple by a hundred Louisiana suns, stood on the floor before the little bench I call the altar, and in it a little nosegay of field flowers. Somehow the stained glass behind the altar grew misty before my eyes. It had all been accomplished so quietly and the little floral offering was so pitifully meager and sweet.

Just before I started for the store with the mail at 9, one of my ancient negro friends tapped at my door. He wanted to tell me that he and his wife had been to church this morning, for it was 15 years ago this cotton chopping time that their son had died and they "felt like us-es wants to go to a place sich as it becausen of him and everybody say you say it's alright for us-es to go to your church."

And so, what with such testimony in a single day from two such widely separated spaces on the social ladder, I cannot give much concern to people like Adam Rand or any of the Natchitoches gentry who contrive to work themselves into a stew because Yucca houses our Chapel.

1SSP

4222

And in today's post comes a letter from Lois Lester of Waverly. I am not sending it along because I want to quote from it eventually in the Mason article. From one sentence in the letter comes the surprising morsel of news, suggesting, or not implying but rather leading me to infer that everybody seems to have had a finger in the Audubon bird pie, for in her letter, Lois remarks in passing that on one of the plates of the original *Elephant Edition*, is penned on the back, - I believe in Mr. Audubon's hand, that "this bird was drawn by my wife, Lucy", - or some such. Before we get done with collecting such information, I shall not be at all surprised to learn that Mr. A.'s contemporaries, everybody from Abraham Lincoln to Queen Victoria and back, splashed in at least a couple of feathers in the imposing assortment.

And from Robina comes a letter saying that she is writing to Briarwood to invite Caroline to drive with her to Melrose on Saturday, May 20th, giving them an opportunity to spend the day with everybody, including little Miss Alberta. She says her plan is to pick up Caroline early and drive to Melrose, taking Caroline back in the evening and spending the night with her at Briarwood, and so get back to Shreveport on Sunday. It sounds like a good plan.

And from Dora comes a package of birthday shirts, some pastel shades of the sport variety, and each with down swing neck lines except one which is something after the cut of my favorite shirt presented to me by that lady of Lyme, only instead of being pale-pale, it is somewhere between canary and maize, which, if I ever appear in it, ought to drive all the local orioles crazy.

As for other aspects of mental confusion, nothing has been heard from little Miss Alberta, scheduled to make her bow on the 11th. Paynie came puffing in to see me about first dark in a complete flurry after having talked with Nina McInnes's husband in Baton Rouge today. It seems that Nina's husband saw the Winks at his home in Shreveport last night, and from his wife and the Winks he learned that Nina and some other lady was or were fixing to come to spend 10 days at Melrose with little Miss Alberta. I had expected Nina to come for a little visit, but I scarcely expected her to be here for the duration of little Miss A.'s visit. As to the identity of the third woman, I can't imagine either her name or station. Paynie was in but a complete panic, fearing they would want to occupy Mother's room, etc., etc. He also told me Joe and Juanita would be in tomorrow from Texas, - information he must have picked up from J. H., I suppose, for J. H. and Joe do much telephoning in lieu of letter writing.

And so the wheels turn and May 11th draws to a close.

I reckon I should have made this Memo shorter, what with all the preparations you have to make, prior to your departure. But one more day, after which you will be addressed the last one for a little spell, and then your vacation will really start in earnest. I hope all is running smoothly and you are able to get an occasional breathing spell so that you may not be too tired at the moment of your departure.....

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Friday, May 12th, 1950.
Memorandum:

And so the week runs out, still hot and humid with a cloud coverage making it seem more so.

And by the time this comes to your true hand, you will be practically ready to take off. The enclosures will suggest what came in today's post. Isn't it grand that the Manhattan-Mexican jaunts coincide so perfectly. I have responded to the letter of la bag, remarking upon the delights of the thermometer readings in Manhattan in May and the higher altitudes in Mexico, both of which will insure delights for the respective travelers, and naming nobody. But I did add, just for good measure that I understood Joe and Juanita are planning to come here on the 20th of May, thus forestalling a visit on Sister's part, and so leaving the road open for Robina and Caroline.

Mrs. Rand came this afternoon with three ladies. She had received a note from me in the morning and wanted to say with yow much pleasure she looked forward to your impending visit. I wanted to get a line to her so that she would have your name well fixed in her mind, for she probably has never seen it spelled out before.

She seemed to be ever so much more like her old self and was as gay as could be. She wanted to know if I wanted the old contraption she has for grinding out beaten biscuit, with a view to putting it in the museum. I would. She also entranced me by bringing the first gardenias of the season, for the local bushes still seem to be holding back their explosions, in anticipation, I think, of your impending visit. Curiously enough, the older bushes of Melrose seem ever so much behind the same genealogy in the Arenbourg apartment, which seems odd, indeed, since the older the bush, the earlier they usually seem to grow into little mounds of perfumed white.

Early this morning, Celeste went on a frolic with some of her girl friends to Shreveport. I talked with Nina long distance, advising her to stage her visit along about next mid-week sometime. From her I learned what none of us new here, - and so typical it is that we should thus get information, - to wit, that little Miss Alberta will arrive in Natchitoches about 10:30 tonight, instead of on the 11th, as we had earlier been given to understand.

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She usually stays here but ten days, which ought to put her back at 823 Royal well before your arrival in the Crescent City. I need scarcely need add that should you contact her, it would be sufficient to say you are a friend of mine, poised to take off for Mexico, for unless Celeste mentions it to her, she won't have to worry about your Melrose plans.

And while I think of it, in speaking of New Orleans, it is said a restaurant named Cobb's has good food. I don't know where it is but I believe the place is well known. It has none of the fashion of Antoine's which at the moment seems to be living more on past prestige than present food excellence. I think you will find the food at the Monteleon Hotel good, too, if you are able to get away from the nouveau set up of the Roosevelt to dine. I think New Orleans food is as safe as that of any American city and probably the sea foods, if you care for shrimp and the like, will be excellently prepared.

As you probably know about Mexico, I need scarcely remark that its food is dubious and it is best to avoid native dishes unless pretty thoroughly cooked, with a care given to avoiding any greens or other raw things. In Mexico City, it seems to be the consensus of opinion that one should eat at American restaurants, Chase and Sanborn, if I remember correctly, being one of the more popular.

Oh, yes, and if you should find yourself, while South of the border in the Bill Spratling town of Tasko or however it is spelled, do by all means contact Nathalie Scott for as an old resident of the country, she ought to be able to give you a heap of helpful hints, and she will be particularly glad to contact one who will be seeing the Rands so shortly.

And so, as the old phrase has it, "all that remains for me to do is to speed the parting guest".

I shall be traveling with you in thought from the 18th forward, hoping that every minute of the trip may be grand, and at the same time counting the days to the 5th or 6th of June or whenever it is convenient for you to pause in your flight along about that time.

Curiously enough I can't get L. J. out of my mind, knowing full well how much she is going to miss you during the impending weeks, but her loss is my gain and she, too, will be counting the days.....

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Sunday, May 14th, 1950.

Nina telephoned just before supper last night. I took the call in the office. I recommended she come down Tuesday, spend the night and return home Wednesday, giving her an opportunity to do a little painting and chatting with little Miss A. She felt odd about the withdrawal of the invitation Celeste had extended, and doubted if she would come. I appreciated her viewpoint.

Dr. and Mrs. Rand came this afternoon while little Miss A. was sitting with me on the gallery at Lucca. Celeste came over. Conversation good. Dr. Rand brought me a clipping about the Natchez Garden Club buying the Priest's house of Spanish times, planning to move it to some site, the present owners intending to tear it down to create a parking lot. Dr. Rand said he had received a note from Dr. Mattas and the latter had dictated some book to Dr. Rand.

The Rands took my guests to their home for a chat and a whiz in the speed boat. I demurred their invitation on the hoax I was expecting pilgrims. I broke my routine by having supper with little Miss A. at Celeste's, just the 4 of us, including Madam Regard. Little Miss A. got out on a limb, denouncing people of 65 and over with relatives of wealth who accept Old Age Pension checks. I tried pinching and pushing her knee under the table to get her off the track, what with Madam Regard doing just what Miss A. was complaining about, but little Miss A.'s only reaction was to ask me what I was pushing her for.

Monday, May 15th, 1950.

People from Ardmore, Oklahoma draw up at the gate just as I am going to the store. They mention having seen the Swan article in the Picayune and inquired if it might be possible to see it. It would. Little Miss A. says Mary Rose Brandford is living in Santa Fe, New Mexico where she is courting some newspaper man, her son living in New Orleans attending Tulane. To my surprise, little Miss A. seems to like the Chapel. A letter from Mrs. Holloman, asking if she can pass this way on Saturday or Sunday. What with Robina and Caroline D. scheduled for Saturday, I respond with a great big No, recommending she come some week day, since she is free after 10:30 a.m.

Grandpa wilts under the unusual heat. He has never cared for milk and always gives his share to little Grandpa and her offspring. It seems to be the only thing he does like. Three times during the past 5 days he has spent most of the time curled up on the gallery during which time I have seen little grandpa bring him a nice fat rat she has captured. Without taking a mouthful of the meat herself, she brings him the freshly dispatched animal and having placed it beside her friend, has turned and walked away, whereupon Grandpa has manifested signs of a returning appetite. This is the only instance I ever witnessed such attention on the part of one animal for another, but the friendship between motherly little grandpa and her friend, altered Grandpa, is extraordinary.

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4226

Tuesday, May 16th, 1950.

Marvelous weather but humid, and so found myself all a-drip before good sun up at Arenbourg.

Mrs. Rand came in afternoon, bringing Mrs. Gaston Porterie, Mrs. Wetamark, Des Evans and Ed.'s little girl, Ellen, with her colored nurse. They were for my delectation, but for the African House she brought a beaten biscuit grinder, an ante bellum contraption when ample strong arms there were to beat the biscuit, after which they were rolled through the grinder on this outfit, looking much like a clothes wringer, the doe coming through and resting on a marble slab which forms the top of the thing, which is about the size of a sewing machine. The rollers are of copper or iron. Once on the slab, the stuff was cut into whatever shape desired and put in pans and baked. I guess it was a good idea but it does seem like a lot of excitement in contrast to a rolling pin or some such flattening agency which certainly would have taken up a lot less room and a heap less care.

She also brought and planted for me a fine gardenia, placed at the end of the front gallery. It is said to bloom periodically throughout the year. She brought another of a smaller variety, but the plant itself of imposing dimensions, with the idea of putting it in the Chapel. I sent back by her a big old pot of red (President) and white (Eureka) cannas for her Mother

A galaxy of fire flies compensated the White Garden tonight for the absence of the moon which is two or three weeks will be combining with them and little Miss Lee to make the night perfect.

Wednesday, May 17th, 1950.

Hot and humid. Letter from Robina saying she and Caroline Dormon will spend Saturday at Melrose, arriving about 10 a.m., Caroline to meet Robina somewhere along the main highway between Shreveport and Kampti. What with the project dependent upon the Dormons, it may be 12 or 2 before they blow in. Little Miss A. gave me a lecture on Mrs. Eddy's religion. She explains Charles had little or no chance of getting well on it since no husband or wife has much opportunity to practice the required faith if the spouse doesn't join whole heartedly in the business. It's lucky for the Baer people that asperin works on the taker and correction of a man's headache when the tablet is swallowed depends upon whether his wife subscribes or not. Little Miss A. had on a gay gingham dress on which I complimented her. She seemed pleased and said she paid 50 cents for it at a garbage sale. I expressed astonishment. Patou out of the trash can. She asked me if I had never been to a garbage sale. I hadn't. She explained people give things to a group and the latter sells it at reasonable prices. I opined it must be something like sales I used to go to in Natchez, but there they called them rummage sales. She pondered on the word and allowed as how that might be the term they use in New Orleans, too.

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Thursday, May 18th, 1950.

Manhattan minded all day, what with this being the magical date for Miss Lydia's flight into freedom. Over the fence Harper Bazaar preparations proceed in anticipation of a card party Saturday afternoon, and concentration of efforts to make everything spick and span must have impelled a hasty reading of the mail, for I was told of a note received in the morning mail indicating a friend would be in New Orleans today. Little Miss Alberta sat until 8:00 with Celeste on the latter's gallery and the two, returning to the big house, thought they heard a screen door close as they entered the place. All lights were turned on in the house and they screamed for me. I pointed out the only prowler was a dog which had entered the kitchen through an unlatched door and departed by another. "Little" Slam dropped by to chat for a few moments before going to the honkey tonk for a conference about next Sunday's baseball game. I understand he is the star Melrose member of the team. He wanted to ask me if it was true that tie vines which run so riotously along fences and through the grown cotton plants are really, as people say, the metamorphosis of the 17 year locust which, they say, after ~~going~~ going into the ground in the autumn of one year, comes up as a tie vine the following summer. He says the old folks say they can always tell when next year's crop of tie vines are going to be plentiful, since the prediction can be made by the abundance of insect sounds at first sun down, for by noticing how many locusts are then "sawin' on their fiddles", one can determine that a like amplitude of tie vines will be present the coming season.

Saturday, May 20th, 1950.

A heavy shower about 3 a.m. unfolded scads of gardenias and magnolias which I gathered before 6 for Celeste in anticipation of her party. At 11 came a flock of plantation friends, knocked out of labor by the heavy rains during the night.

I let them entertain themselves on the gallery while my secretary ran through the mail with me as I disported in the tub. There was a grand letter from Miss Lee, indicating the decks had been cleared for departure, and enclosing communications regarding her Louisiana visit. In the morning's post, too, came a package which I take to be for Miss Lee, - probably 7 league boots or some such, and so I didn't open it. The Dormon-Denholme duo arrived a little after 11 and remained until 4. Everything was ever so pleasant throughout, and the Sherry Robina brought was excellent, wit a glass of it, or rather half a wine glass of it starting Caroline's tongue going a mile a minute. Little Miss Alberta disdained any stimulant, being devoted to unadorned black coffee 20 times a day. Little Miss A. couldn't resist her unflinching impulse to start an argument. Somebody mentioned how upset the Adam was following her Mother's funeral, not because of her Mother's passing but because her own daughter was drunk. "How do you know she was drunk", queried little Miss A. "We sent her to the Melrose laboratory", was the answer. "I never knew they had one" was Miss A.'s response.

4228

Sunday, May 21st, 1950.

Lovely little new moon tonight. I wonder from what vantage point it is being viewed by the Louisiana traveler of Lyme.

Weather marvelous, - hot, humid, all blue and gold and a pleasant breeze. About 50 pilgrims, per schedule, arrived at 10 a.m., being a group of historically minded people from central Louisiana. About a third of them were interested in the tour, I reckon, which is a high average. The rest were the type that likes to spill over into the kitchen to view the modern butaine gas stove and confuse the cook while the glories of ante bellum colored culture are being expounded in the library. I contacted perhaps three civilized members of the party which is also a high average when such a number requires looking after. The Rands were at their camp in force, - 5 cars at least, but I believe it was mostly the younger set.

Long moved from Little River to Cane River, the little house hard by the spillway, across the road from Clemence. He came to talk with me about "rigging up" his new place. I offered him a couple of hundred feet of wire fence that will stretch along the public road in front of his place, and so discourage his offspring from getting run over. We talked about his hogs and chickens and where they would be concentrated in order to allow the planting of flowers and shrubbery.

My second secretary, referring to a faucet left running, employed the word "briefly" in the curious way it seems to be used in this area. Explaining that the water was filling the pot to overflowing, he said: "It was running it briefly and was near about ready to run over."

4229

Monday, May 22nd, 1950.

Curious how my mind travels up and down the country from Manhattan to Mobile, and why it should be turning Mobile over and over I can't imagine. Perhaps a post card from Alabama may indicate Old Lyme has slipped down in that direction.

An allegory expressed musically might cover a local episode.

Say, for example, Tschaikowski had composed a symphony entitled Melrose. Its copyright was held by the Henry-Rubenstein's. A group of music lovers, being unable to view the score any place else, requested permission to inspect it. The Henry-Rubenstein's, being the owners, granted permission, but turned the group over to the conductor whose role I might play. The pilgrims came and, to their enchantment, not only were permitted to examine the score but were entranced when the conductor offered them a whole rendition of the piece, together with a vast amount of additional material which he had labored over all by himself, - material quite outside the limited Melrose symphony but compositions of exclusive interest to the pilgrims in other fields of composition. On getting ready to depart, the pilgrims in a burst of appreciation and enthusiasm, pooled expressions of their appreciation to the conductor and presented him with the same with the suggestion it be used as he pleased to further his research which he had so unexpectedly shared with them. The wife of one of the Henry-Rubenstein's chanced to pass at the moment, and thrilled by the enchantment of the pilgrims, subscribed to their impulse and insisted that the conductor should graciously receive their expression. Everyone seemed happy about the whole thing and au revoirs were said all round.

And then, this morning when I went for the post, one of the Henry-Rubenstein's said that his wife had spoken of the matter and that the corporation couldn't accept the gift. I hadn't thought of it as a gift either to Tschaikovsky or to the copyright owners, but rather to the conductor who had done what he could to interpret and add to the enjoyment and musical knowledge of the pilgrims, far beyond the limits of the mere reading of the score of the Melrose Symphony. Still, the conductor could see the copyright owner's view point and so the gift was turned over and a check to an equal amount was forwarded with a letter, written by the copyright owner to the leader of the pilgrims, saying no gift could be accepted on the part of the Henry-Rubenstein's.

It has nothing to do with the case, but the conductor out of his own pocket had twice paid for having the stage prepared for the reception of the pilgrims, a week ago when they had been expected, according to the copyright owners, and the following week when said copyright owners recalled that any error of one week had been made on his part regarding the date of the visit.

ESSA

4230

Tuesday, May 23rd, 1950. Following Friday night's rain, everything in the vegetation department is jumping and the power lawn mower is silent, waiting for a missing part, lost last week. The grass is climbing to astonishing heights all over the place.

Mrs. Combs dropped by and dropped in to see little Miss Alberta in her latest efforts of her paint brushes. After Mrs. Combs departed, little Miss Alberta said she seemed like a nice person but it was seldom she could like anyone who worked for the welfare department. Said little Miss Alberta: "If people would pay attention to life and work the way I always have, there wouldn't be any need for welfare workers and I wouldn't have to help paying their salaries with my tax money." The elder Morgan or old John D. couldn't have expressed their own ideas on the subject more pointedly. While at supper, I was advised Miss Bowman of the college had arrived, bringing a flock of pilgrims with her. They waited and at first dark I prepared to give them a mid night tour, all the houses being in order, for I had made a round immediately following the Sunday tour with the Historical Society people. On entering the Bindery, I noticed what I took to be a sprig of pecan leaves on the floor, but on gathering up the spring, I discovered the object to be a number of bills which must have fallen from my pocket on Sunday, immediately following the departure of the pilgrims when I had made a round of the buildings before putting their financial contribution into a little tin box of its own. Misere.....now the Henry-Rubenstein have forwarded a check, reimbursing the pilgrims for what was thought to be the amount they had left, and here is some additional money which must have been in the original contribution and lost. The Lord alone knows how much else may have been scattered about, since naturally I did not count the money when it was handed to me in handfuls. On receiving the check, they will think somebody short-changed them in making the return. There has been such a rumpus, as between husband and wife, in the family of the copyright owners, that bringing up the matter again would be like tossing an atom bomb into the midst of things. I think I shall give the money to the wife and let her hand it to one of the officers of the society whom she knows personally. I hope she meanders to his fair city before long, so this mess, - so uncalled for, can be cleaned up a little, although the stains of misunderstanding will probably never be quite rubbed out.

ESSA

4231

Wednesday, May 24th, 1950.

A letter from -- of all places -- Mobile.....

A telephone this afternoon at 5 from New Orleans....How nice.

Forever I shall marvel at the elimination of Space and Time and how they both are obliterated by the daily presence of those we cherish most who, by being forever with us, never really seem remote so that the sound of a voice, perhaps not heard in a year or a decade, sounds just as familiar as though it had been heard a few minutes before.

The day all sunshine and gold and, happy omen, my pet gardenia put out its first bloom this evening.

Thursday, May 25th, 1950.

The weather continues splendid and it was pleasant to think of Miss Lee possibly heading out for South of the Rio Grande as I scuffled around among the weeds at Arenbourg, for starting in that direction means an earlier trip back in the Arenbourg direction.

The Knipmayers came in the morning, with little news save a Government statement that the country is short 800,000 cats and that the high death toll taken by automobiles of skunks, plus the other shortage, means the country is facing a rat problem of serious proportions.

Mrs. Holloman came in the afternoon. I did some work with her while somebody's Aunt Lottie who came with her entertained little Miss Alberta.

The Dark Duke passed by this evening. He likes the new place he is now dwelling on the Spillway bayou. In spite of the mid summer temperatures currently obtaining, he says he has to close his windows by midnight, the breeze from the river is so cool. I hope air circulation next Christmas will not be as strong proportionately.

Friday, May 26th, 1950.

I found little grandpa dead on the lawn near the big house this morning. She must have found some poison recently put out by the Parish Health Department. Her fur was wet - wet, however, which seems odd. I can only suppose the heavy dew of the grass could explain what other wise would suggest drowning. I am wondering where her kittens could have gone, for they haven't shown up today. I had little Miss Alberta make a sketch of the original St. Augustin's Church as appears in the portrait of Grandpere, feeling it may be of interest both for the article on Cane River Churches and also for data or articles on the Centenary of the Church in 1950, with the sketch of the building in the portrait having been painted in 1836.

1851

4232

Friday, May 26th, 1950

.....
A New Orleans letter from Lydia, clearly indicating she has seen and comprehended more in one or two little tours about the Crescent City than most people who visit the place annually for a life time. And thus once more is the truth established that we find at the end of the road to Paradise about what we have brought with us. A package from Robina containing summer candles for the Chapel, little low, fat ones that will not collapse when the thermometer gets to carrying on, and yet, in spite of their smallness of stature, they will burn ten hours at a stretch.

I enticed little Miss Alberta to Yucca where she made a sketch on canvas, stressing browns and greens, of the original St. Augustin's Church, from the original painting of Grandpere. I think it ever so much better than the one tossed off previously. During the afternoon someone remarked something to her about the Yucca chapel, wherein she remarked she was convinced I must be a Catholic since she couldn't imagine anybody contriving such a Chapel for anyone belonging to another faith. I take it she would consider building nothing of the sort unless it were to the glory of Mary Baker Eddy.

Saturday, May 27th, 1950.

Little Miss A. left by bus for New Orleans this morning. She was ready with duffle at her feet and hat on her head on the front gallery three hours before it was time for her to start. She sensed Paynie didn't much fancy her presence here and doubts if she will ever come back.

In the afternoon a message from the merchant-planter indicated Madame de Montesperan was in the region. I was invited to pay my respects at a nearby camp. The master, I think within her hearing, asked me what I thought about having her to supper. I thought not, even though the place is comparatively void of people. Celeste having taken a two day retreat at some religious institution in the Alexandria countryside and Madam Regard having gone to spend the week end with Miss Sally at Magnolia. The General came about 8 o'clock to spend the night.

1851

4233

correction:
actual dates covered are
Monday, May 29th, through Saturday, June 3rd, 1950.

Monday through Saturday,
May 22nd - May 27th, 1950.

What a disappointment for the great Catherine had Potemkin been incapacitated just at the moment preparations should have been started for the glorification of the countryside in anticipation of her long awaited trip to the Grimes.

As for my part, I had planned dusting off a heap of weeds at Arenbourg and smoothing out a half dozen grass plots at Yucca in anticipation of next week's visit, when Lo! I awoke on Monday morning to discover I was possessed of all the outward abdominal curves of a prospective mother. At the best of my stomach bulged what I had supposed to be a tick into a full blown carbunkle. The ramification of the darned thing, spreading and swelling all through the sex department made standing or sitting up a torture. And so I remained pretty much flattened out all day, getting up only to go to the "ost" office and to pass by Celeste's for a shot of coffee, realizing that if I admitted I remained flattened out, so much fuss for attending me would knock me out completely. Assuming there isn't much to do in such a physical situation but await for the expanding business to complete its concentration, I continued to stay put while plans for prettying up the Grimes had to go by the boards completely. And thus Catherine will view her kingdom in a light even less favorable than it usually appears. And while the disappointment at the initial view may be the more disappointing and depressing, still, being a soul of substance and imagination, perhaps she will even conclude that it was better that way, for with realities in evidence, plans for future developments may be the more intelligently pursued.

But even though I had been able to mosey about, perhaps little would have been accomplished for the rains this week have been torrential and almost daily. Cane River is higher than at any time since the flood of 1945. Grass and weeds thus standing in water have flourished securely without any chance to the power mower or the weed knife disturbing their activity, but the same moisture inducing growth in that section is undoubtedly favoring the magnolias and persimmons and pear trees, and so, in the end, the week will not, perhaps, have been all on the debit side.

Fat came home for a ten day vacation on Wednesday, after which he will return to S. U. Law School for Summer School. Some kind of Mrs. Sand, Millard Oregon, or some such, came to see me on Wednesday. He had seen Paul King in Boston last week, and the latter had recommended that he pass by Melrose to see me on his return to New Orleans. I wish he had come last week, for he might have had a better reception, but somehow I managed to give him a little tour, and in spite of much twisting and revolving about on my chair, did succeed in keeping a steady patter of conversation going for a couple of hours, probably only because a bottle of wine was on hand, and my more pressing sensations were postponed.

8884

4234

Sunday, May 28th, 1950.

Hot and sunny until 9:30, with thunder showers the balance of the day until night when a brilliant moon appeared about 9.

The General and I breakfasted alone together. He spoke of the Derby and the pleasant social time at Churchill Downs. He mentioned a recent reception in Baton Rouge or New Orleans for Frances Parkinson Keyes and said he found her cold, aggressive and thoroughly unsocial but said he liked her book about Louisiana. He said he thought it would be a pity if the Republicans nominated Eisenhower for President in 1950, since the General was no politician to start with and would probably win and that his Presidential office would probably end up by tarnishing his military fame. He said he was doing alright as President of Columbia and had been hired for that post for two cardinal reasons, - to attract money even as did Nicholas Murray Butler, and to weed out Communism in the institution, especially in Teacher's College. I presume the first reason is correct but I doubt if the second is I have no doubt the millionaire friends in the Churchill Downs set and the heavy brass in military circles incline to find Communism under every political and educational chip.

I was glad to dine along with J. A. and the General at noon, immediately after which the Henrys departed for town. I went to the Rands for barbecued chicken at 4 and didn't get back until 8. The food was marvelous, the crowd rather too extensive and the desire too strong to get back home again, for conversation was dull, what with the conversationalists captured by the nit-wits to play cards. The half dozen children present had a wonderful time swimming from the dock and the rowboat while the grown ups apparently got a kick churning up Cane River in the speed boat while the others dabbled at cards. Something tells me I am likely to go later and return earlier in the future, what with all the stuff around here I want to do, including the reception of my own friends who, living not in Alexandria, won't need to go in for water sports and card games while visiting me.

4235

Sunday, June 4th, 1950.

Pleasant day. Few pilgrims. Little activity.

Dr. Rand came and gave me some kind of a shot. Advised hot pads now and then for the carbunkle.

Frances Rand and B. Randolph came with him, both bearing much food by way of a solitary banquet. Folded up at first dark.

Monday, June 5th, 1950.

A letter from Miss Lydia from the capitol of Maximilian and Charoatta. Wednesday will be the magical day. I talked with Mrs. Rand who will be at the air port. I crept around a little but lack sufficient energy to exert much physical effort. Sorry peasants can't be dancing on the hill sides as Catherine pursues her journey into the Crimea.

Tuesday, June 6th, 1950.

A plane is winging its way up from South of the border. It was so pleasant to contemplate the trip via Houston to New Orleans.

Clif Byrd passed this way about 4, bringing somebody or other with him. Conversation was dull. I thought myself so adroit when I succeeded in engineering them beyond the front gate just before supper. Half an hour later I didn't think my doings so very effective when J. A. came to supper bringing both of the callers with him.

Saw Patfor a few minutes after supper. He says he is returning to Baton Rouge Friday in his new car. I didn't know he had one.

Wed. and Thurs. June 7th and 8th, 1950. Happy are they whose days are so filled with harmony and oneness that individual episodes cannot be separated for individual recording.

Friday, June 9th, 1950.

A cloudy, gentle dawn; a mocking bird's song and goodbye.

"When Paradise was fading from the Earth, a single rose was saved and treasured by an angel who gives to every mortal, sooner or later in life, one breath from this immortal flower, - one alone, but it is worth a million ordinary breaths."

7834

4236

Friday, June 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Thirty million times would not suffice to express numerically the zest and delight marching with me as I proceeded to Arenbourg this morning.

The sunshine broke through the sagging clouds a little before 6. Somehow Arenbourg seemed so very special this morning, as though the finger of an angel had been placed upon it the day before, the magnolias looked so much greener, the lilies so much whiter.

I came back for breakfast at 7:15. The weather continued to hold. Back at Arenbourg until 9:30 when the heavens sagged and torrents came down from on high. I was soaked as I labored, and loved the drenching, for the dampness were tears of joy and the perfect bond between heaven and earth and yesterday and tomorrow was set and sealed.

After a quick bath, I found precisely the place I sensed I would best enjoy the lovely wooven piece from South of the border, - as a Mexican Goblein, gracing the wall immediately to the left of the portrait by Lion. It looks so pretty on that white space and, as you know, is so situated as to greet me whenever I enter the room, glance from my downy couch or chat with my secretary here at my desk. I think you will like the position, too.

It was still raining at dinner time but Pat and J. B. took off for Monroe regardless. Joe and Juanita arrived about an hour after their departure. Curiously enough Joe didn't seem much distressed to have missed his son, - their manifestations of affection are so strangely expressed. They haven't seen each other since Christmas but will probably make contact by the 4th of July. One other commentary from Joe:

"That boy of mine is certainly bad about writing. I don't believe he has written me a letter in six months. - yes, I am sure it is six months because I noticed it in my desk the other day when I told myself I had better make up my mind one of these days before long to answer it."

I haven't seen Celeste and Adam Regard alone but understand they

3834

4237

got back about 10 or 10:30, so take it they did a bit of shopping or some such

I must mark today on my calendar, too, as being one more in which I almost enjoyed respite from pilgrims, -- almost but not quite.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce had petitioned to have a Melrose tour on Thursday but had turned down flat. A flock of photographers who had been lined up to record some of that organization's doings this week telephoned during the day to ask if they couldn't come down. I demurred, saying the place was closed. That, said they, was precisely why they wanted to come, with free spaces to record shots for their cameras. But again I was disagreeable and said No, since recording cameras were certainly worse than non-recording pilgrims as clutterers of houses and gardens.

You may accordingly appreciate my surprise when I found a dozen or so of them on the front gallery of the big house when I returned there with Juanita who had walked over to Yucca with me to commune for a moment in the Chapel. It seems they had bumped into Joe Henry at the front gate and he had let them in. He made the presentations and asked if he might accompany me on the tour. I welcomed his companionship but said that except for a peep at the African House there would be no tour. The photographers were enchanted, assuming, I suppose, that the African House would supply a toe-hold from which other desired ends might be reached. It was already too late in the evening to get pictures, except by flash bulbs and contrary to requests, I forbade them even the second story of the African House. Then they all wanted to see Yucca and I was adamant, and herded the whole posse out of the gardens and on the far side of the front gate. I'll bet some of them will be trying to make another round on the morrow which, of course, will be something else again.

And so comes to a close this memorable June 9th, so precious because of the beauty of its Morning Star whose beams will radiate my surroundings for so many a day ahead. I reckon for each of them, the glory of the Prophets was not that they lived on earth but rather because they once caught a glimpse of Paradise, and even though it was but fleeting, it was enough to inspire them from then on and forever.

A word of greeting to the girl friend and I shall say Good night. Four candles for a quiet ten minutes will cast shadows about the Chapel. Then the doors will close and I shall have a cigarette on the gallery, watching the lanterns of the fire flies in the bamboo and the more permanent constellations higher above the hedge, grateful to God for being so good to me.....

3834

4238

Sunday, June 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I dined at J. H.'s today. On every side I heard such phrases as "She is a darling girl".... "One of the nicest persons ever to come here" etc., etc., and if your ears haven't been burning, it isn't because there has been any absence of delight and pleasure that your presence brought and the memory of it left green.

All yesterday and today I have found myself wondering how the balance of your journey is progressing, hoping against hope that the strenuous past few days and the absence of sleep haven't made you too tired.

Twice on Saturday did word come through from Caroline Dormon. The enclosure, cancelled from Aliston, Alabama, reached me in the morning while after supper cousins of hers from Lake Charles passed this way, after having spent the afternoon with the sisters of Briarwood, where they had but recently arrived from their travels. Apparently they must have dropped the letter in the post just before heading out for home and then raced the Post Office Department to reach this side of the Mississippi before the penned epistle could be delivered. The Dormons, in fine, are sights.

The Joe Henrys pulled out for Conroe in the Houston area about 6:30 this morning. Juanita came to see me Saturday noon right after dinner. She said she had heard such lovely things said about you over the fence. May I congratulate you and express no surprise but infinite admiration for all the pleasure you afforded those with whom you came into contact.

The Dormon kin folk who passed this way chanced to know the address of Mrs. Doty, the expert seamstress who used to do remarkable quilting on Hawaiian coverlets years ago for the Madam. I have been trying to catch up with her for two or three years since Madam Cloutier had some stuff she wanted her to execute for her. Acquiring this bit of information afforded me an excellent opportunity to get off a note to Beaufort, and it goes without saying that I took the opening to mention your delight at the contact with her and her husband and the beauty of their home. I must get Old Louisiana reeled off on Talking Books so I can have the pleasure of reading the chapter

8854

4239

about little Lestan skipping over to visit Uncle Narcisse,
Uncle Phanor, Aunt Benjamin and so on.

Dr. Rand came to see me this afternoon and spoke again
of the happiness his Wednesday contact had afforded him and his.
He brought a mountain of food, sandwiches, 8 deviled eggs in
some kind of a wonderful salade sauce, a gob of spaghetti in
a sauce seemingly made of creamed tomato soup, shot through
with diced chicken, not to mention a dessert not unlike the one
served under the cedars last Wednesday, the deep dish brimming over.
I am glad the Dark Duke passed this way along about first dark for
even though I made him share all this with me, I am still
as stuffed as a tick.

Dr. Rand and I turned through the magazine you had left
for him, and had an opportunity to speak of several points of
mutual interest before some of his guests came over with Florence,
Ed's wife. After that it was hurly-burly, and in the end, I
lied and said I was expecting pilgrims when they asked me to
go back to the camp with them for a while before night settled
down. While on the subject of the Rands, I shall jot down their address,

Dr. and Mrs. King Rand,
2736 Georges Lane,
Alexandria, Louisiana,

and this address I am sure you have, but it occurs to me it may
not be within ready reach, and, in case you should care to drop
them a card, the above will serve the purpose. One thing
about the Rands, they never write letters, and so, in the event
you receive no response to your card, you will not be disappointed.

While I think of it, I would refer to one aspect of the
Spring Pilgrimage article I intended mentioning when we were
running through it. That is the matter of illustrations, should
you decide to submit it to a publication like Collier's. The ideal
approach to the publication of this particular article would be with
a view to having this merely the first of a series of articles,
somewhat after the pattern of the Archibald Rutledge articles
that used to run in the Saturday Evening Post years ago. Perhaps
it would be premature to refer to such a matter when submitting this
initial effort, but, if you think so, it might be alright to
insert a paragraph or append a post script, stating that if
the Editor should so desire, photographs of historic Melrose
buildings could be supplied. But this is merely a suggestion,
and however it strikes you, after running through the rough draft
of the article itself, will be the determining factor, for your
own reaction to such a suggestion will receive my whole approval,
which ever way you decide.

1454

4240

Monday, June 12th, 1950.

Memorandum: Sunshine and humidity continue to keep things growing
mightily.

Another week of this and tempers will begin to get
shorter and scuffling will probably be the order of the day when
the 19th arrives and every mother's son -- and daughter --
celebrate the day in fishing parties, a picnic in the open,
possibly a baseball game and undoubtedly a bang-up swing out at
the honkey-tonk.

Mattie complains of a misery in her head, or rather she
did complain of it this morning, but by supper time she was
all ship-shape again, having applied her unfailing remedy for
such ailments during the day by making herself a little sack
of red pepper and knotting the thing in her bandana about her
head. Fortunately that seems to cure almost everything from
headache to wbbbley ankles, - and at the same time appears to
make the wearer of the charm impervious to heat.

Perhaps I had better turn Berr Postell over to Mattie
when he heads in this way, looking for local cure-alls.

And then there is the case of Wylie Anthony and his wife,
Honey. Wylie is very jealous of Honey and as both are bags,
he is probably intuitively right. But Honey has one up on
him for by some hokus-pokus which seems to consist mostly of
magical signs cast in his direction as she waves her hands
in front of him, and Wylie's head automatically starts
nodding and in a minute or so he is fast asleep. And sleep
he continues until Honey has returned home from a frolic in
the big road, perfectly assured from long experience that
her husband will never awaken until she repeats the hokus pokus
signs and admonishes him to be-stir himself. Acquaintances
passing the house during Honey's absence have tried to awaken
Wylie but have had scant success. The Dark Duke, Peter and
Ezra were discussing it the other day and remark that while
the man, usually sitting in a chair, will lift up his head and
open his eyes momentarily, his head falls back down on his
chest again after a second or two and he continues his sleep.
Friend Postell really ought to go to town on that one; I should
think.

I believe the enclosure is of scant or no interest whatsoever,

015A

4241

other than to show the Manhattan travelers brought home hotel stationary with them, for the letter was posted in Shreveport. In the same post from the same source came a letter to J. H. asking when the children might come down, so it looks as though we would be having a visitation shortly. The presence of the children here by themselves is pretty much a matter of indifference to me, - it is the bringing of them and their eventual removal that casts the shadow of coming events.

A passing pilgrim today had much to say about Mr. Kane and a manuscript he is said to be grinding out about old John Macdonough, or however that old miser may have spelled his name. Undoubtedly Mr. Kane will spin some fabulous romance about the old skin-flint and the Herald-Tribune will again sound the trumpets of Fame about "the South's greatest living historian". Power will forever be the thing about which books will be written, - power and the people possessing it, for I suppose such tales represent a fascination, and particularly to those who would be possessed of the stuff, but being denied that, find excitement about reading of those who have had it in their grasp. And old Macdonough certainly was rich, and wealth, like military domination, is a force. By the terms of the Macdonough will, the city of New Orleans, - and Baltimore, too, I believe, have to set aside a day each year and direct the children attending the institutions founded on money from the will, to honor the name of this old fellow who seemed to prove to his own satisfaction that he was smart enough and hard enough to grasp a no end of money, - by fair means and otherwise, - but clearly demonstrated throughout his long career that he hadn't the vaguest notion as to how the stuff could be spent either to his own advantage or that of any one else. Sometimes I have felt sorry for, so etimes I have felt annoyed with people who sat in the midst of the fields, white for the harvest, and couldn't summon up sufficient imagination to garner a blade of grain for the benefit of their neighbors. How they, - and old Macdonough got that way may be interesting but it is certainly going to take a lot of embroidery on Mr. Kane's part to make it palatable. It must be admitted, however, that Kane, of all people, is probably the best qualified to talk about avarice and the manner of knocking down people to get to the front row in the financial section, being the prize bird himself in that particular department.

But speaking of writers, I am wondering why I didn't think to have you get in touch with Alice Walworth Graham while in the Crescent City, for I know the two of you would have hit it off famously. Oh, well, there is recompense in the realization of a heap of unfinished business, for that holds the promise for other adventures in another go-round....

015B

4242

Tuesday, June 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Sunshine and humidity remain the order of the day, but the former in sufficient strength, I think, to put the shoes to rights, and I have accordingly boxed them and they will go forward in the same post.

I have used the original wrapping in which they came, and mention the fact so you may dispose of the paper accordingly.

I have enclosed the Documents of Spain in Natchez, thinking you might enjoy browsing through them occasionally. I believe this is the only complete transcript ever made of them, - the copy going to your true hand and the copy I have in our old bookcase from the estate of Jean Baptiste Metoyer. Much of the data is of minor interest, perhaps, and yet probably some of the pages are of particular interest, as they reveal both colonial edicts covering manners and customs of both the Natchez and Natchitoches country at a time when Spain controlled both communities. If memory serves, - and I have never run through the whole collection, there is a set of laws covering the cultivation of indigo which should be illuminating, and would go far to round out details covering the presence of that dye on the export list of the 1776 Inventory.

I perhaps mentioned that scattered patches of the same old staple that once flourished in the region so widely still survives in patches along Little River and one of my friends has promised to bring me a root so we may have a sample of the almost forgotten plant growing at Arambourg.

I believe it is in these same documents that appears the report by a spy of the King of Spain in Paris in 1789, reporting the troubled state of affairs in the French capitol, immediately following the fall of the Bastille. I take it the King of Spain must have forwarded a copy of this report to his representatives in Natchez.

Finding a little additional space still left in the original package, I have included a modern vase which I thought you might find some use for either at home or perhaps for wild flowers at Greenwood.

The pair of little glass salt dishes were formerly Lestan's, and since you may be turning through Lyle's account of his doings on

4243

4243

La Cote Joyeuse for another go-round in retrospect, I thought you might find this souvenir of Lestan's timely, either for salt or clips or some such.

At Arenbourg yesterday morning I removed all the blossoms from the cape jessamines, thinking to let the full strength of this year's growth go into the plants. The warmth and heavy dew of last night brought out 13 new blossoms on the bush, - the Fortuni, nearest the gallery, and 16 on the one we noticed particularly half way down toward Uncle D'Or's. There were 4 on one of the other bushes in the same locality and 5 on another. It seems to me they are flowering with unusual profusion this year.

The hoe hands continue at their labors, and yet in spite of that activity, I managed to get two operators for the power lawn mowers this afternoon and two men to swing weed knives in the gardens which have a way of touching a low at this season of the year when all effort is concentrated on the fields beyond the bamboo. At the moment, the cotton seems to be growing too fast, with the 12 to 14 inch plants above ground revealing when sampled to have a root system but an inch in depth and with a radius of but an inch or two. With the soil kept so loose along the rows, it is obvious a big breeze would tend to topple whole battalions at a puff. But what with vegetation having a tendency to correct its own lack of balance, I reckon this matter, too, will come back to normalcy soon.

The postman made his rounds an hour earlier than usual this morning. He brought but nothing, not even papers or catalogues and so I take it he must have not bothered waiting for the mail trains, or else the trains passed by Bayou Natchez without stopping. Celeste was particularly looking for a note from Betty Regard whom she and Madam Regard plan to visit this week end in New Iberia. I believe they leave here bright and early Friday morning and plan to return Sunday night or Monday morning. It looks like a wide open field for the advent of a Wenk or a Montessa, - or both, which would certainly present a fine kettle of fish.

Did you notice an account of a bag who made a terrible racket when she noticed a policeman putting an arrest card on a car that had parked at a meter on the thoroughfare without any money being put in the meter. She screamed and yelled and made such a racket a big crowd converged on the place, to hear the bag swear the old meter wasn't working. And so to prove he was right and quiet the bag and the crowd, the policeman fished about and found the appropriate coin, and inserted it, and the meter did work. Whereupon la bag just roared and strolled off, remarking the car wasn't hers anyway. It sounded so much like a Shreveport antic.....

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R.D 6/9/50

Wednesday, June 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

On Saturday, June 10th, two ladies, one in New Orleans, one in Shreveport, penned and posted letters which reached me this 14th day of the month. New York or California letters would have made it in about the same time.

But even though the Crescent City one dwaddled along the way, after leaving your true hand, its advent delighted me.

How nice to know that the sun broke through as your destination, and how pleasant to know that a telephone set all to rights so far as the ultimate destination of your travels are concerned. Such a combination of circumstances, I hope, conspired to make the balance of your stay in the Crescent City ever so pleasant, and I shall be eager to learn all you did during your final hours in Louisiana.

Since last Friday, I have constantly been experiencing a new set of reactions that are altogether new and infinitely precious. A week ago tonight, while on the gallery, I realized and perhaps voiced the opinion that the place would never be quite the same again to me. But after Thursday came Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and the changed impression that I sensed would come has been so much more intense and fulsome that it bears down upon me with unusual force that a personality and a presence cannot only leave an impression but somehow leave a generous part of itself to make everything that was pleasant before become a fragment of Paradise.

During the day while busied at one thing or another, it seems as though the one sharing things with me might be but just over the fence, - not far away at all, but likely to appear at any odd moment. And at night when the fireflies begin describing luminous arcs across the bamboo background in earthly harmony with the more staid planets and shooting stars from on high, that same presence seems to be not at all remote in some far away city, but all around me, drinking in the grandeur of the lovely world of deep green, gold and blue, and somehow in spirit, fusing with my own as together we absorb the restfulness of our surroundings and contemplate the morrow with faith and gratitude to God for all the happiness that is ours. What a grand experience and how indebted I shall forever be to you for having made it real.

MSA

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Your kind reference to Arenbourg impells me to recommend that when glancing at the snapshot, - the one facing the river from the entrance to the circular drive, you try to envision the little magnolias, that may show in the picture, as more dominant features of the place a few years hence. The ones on each side of the entrance plus the one in the middle of the circle will then be 20 to 30 feet high and easily represent the focal point of Units 2 and 3 obelisks of shiney evergreen, holding down the corners and pointing heavenward in the middle. And of course, at the same time the drive itself from gate to gate will be canopied by the lacwork of the laternating pears and persimmons, a glory of blossoms in the spring a patch of orange sunset in the autumn, the individual trees linked together by the connecting hedges, and the whole business backed and flanked by explosions of alternating red and white crepe myrtles.

In regarding one's offspring, the parent, I suppose, is inclined not only to view the child but to super-impose on actuality a vision of the offspring grown to man's estate. I suppose I am guilty of this dual concept in the case of Arenbourg, but if anticipation is a fault, I hope you may join me in thus summoning up what reality may be like, now that we have together viewed the pattern.

The Dark Duke and his brother whom we met in the big road have just passed by to invite me to a housewarming tomorrow night. It is characteristically Cane River-ish, in that the house-warming, to mark the advent of the Dark Duke on setting up of his domestic hearth by the spill way, is to be held not in his home where we stopped, but at Puny's house. Zelma is preparing a big old chicken gumbo for tomorrow night with gobs of potato salade and fixin's, and the invited will be a select list, - Little King and wife, Blam and wife, the brothers Baptiste and Maxine.

Blythe Rand and Natalie Scott are scheduled to spend tomorrow and Friday at the Rand camp, and I have been invited to pass that way for a be-lated supper. Knowing the Rand propensity for food as you do, and guessing as you may what Zelma's chicken gumbo may be like, you can readily picture what restraints I shall have to impose on myself beginning along about sun down on the morrow. I think I shall contrive to pass by the Rand camp early in the evening, withdraw early and then head in for the gumbo on my way home.

One other phenomenon I must remark upon before closing. Never before last week did I particularly notice anything special about the little path as it turns from the back garden by the African House into my own little gate to Ucca. Since then, beneath the pecane branches and the twinkling stars beyond, I never pass the place that it doesn't vibrate with an intensity that only you may appreciate.....

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Memorandum:

First off, I want to congratulate you on the excellence of the letter, written on Sunday, to Celeste, which reached her this morning, 24 hours after yours from New Orleans reached me.

Celeste read your communication aloud to Madam Regard and me. I must say I thought it quite the finest thing of its type I can remember. They were touched deeply by all the kind things it contained. I, too, was glad to learn that you touched home base safely.

And I am glad you were successful in contacting little Miss A., for now, having known the artist, her Art will perhaps have an added significance, and quite aside from that, it will be fun writing about her from time to time, sensing that you will know precisely of whom I am speaking. Did I mention a few months back that Mrs. Holloman spoke to me of having called on little Miss A. with a view to taking her out to dinner, but found little Miss A. in quite a tizzy, having searched all afternoon for her coffee cup which she had lost several hours before. Finally, in despair, the little lady gave up the cup as lost, and throwing care to the winds, pulled off her smock and decided to head out for dinner regardless, only to discover, on reaching for her hat on the top shelf of the armoire, that there was her lost coffee cup, the grounds still in it, resting there in her hat. Verily, there can be but one little Miss A.

Knipmayer Day again and the good doctor and I sipped out wine hard by St. Giggin's Fountain, speaking of you the while, and comparing notes of doings up and down the Parish.

And I must pause momentarily to speak of how one writes "St. Giggin's Fountain", for since the little outit just before the "s" is to indicate the possessive, and yet at the same time the "g" has wilfully been omitted, - "gigging", it almost seems as though one should write it "St. Giggin's Fountain", don't you think so.

Well, so much for such non-sense, and I reckon as the days grow hotter, I incline toward greater lightness in the head. The thermometer "hoovers" in the 90's, and what with a couple of gardeners to tidy things up a little this afternoon, I really found it warm, and was glad when some Fort Worth pilgrims passing this way afforded me an excuse to momentarily split and infinitive and jump from shade to shade.

3454

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Two glimpses of life on "ye olde plantation" for this year of Grace, 1950, --one non-medical, the other social, -- provide vignettes of the local world in which we live. Were the Melrose Memorandum to appear in print, I am wondering how these manifestations of life appear to the read of, -- say, -- 2050.

Levy Williams, the stalwart, shiftless step-father of my second secretary, lives in a cabin on Rapillon Bayou, off Little River way with his second wife and six children by the latter. The sixth child, -- a girl, was born last Friday, with scant if any preparations made in anticipation of the event. The mother draped herself close to the edge of the bed as the child was being born while the father placed a cow hide bottom chair along side. In spite of previous experience, neither parent seemed to know what to do about cutting the cord, and so the child, still attached to its mother, was placed in the chair and over it was thrown the jacket of its father's overalls. Seeing no necessity for rushing into things, the father eventually notified the Parish Health Office, and a nurse from Dr. Knipmeyer's office journeyed down from town to set mother and child aright, the final separation being accomplished seven hours after the actual birth of the child. The latter, and mother, too, seem to be thriving. Murrel merely mentioned he had a new sister and said the nurse had given it the name of Geraldine. Dr. Knipmeyer mentioned the birth of the child this morning and ran through the particulars respecting details for the birth certificate which my second secretary had filled in. All seemed to be in order, save possible the child's name, which Murrel had entered as "Jerry Dean".

On the social side, tonight's party at "uny's" in celebration of the Dark Duke and family setting up housekeeping hard by the spillway, was a success. At first dark, Log and Peter, clad in dark trousers and freshly laundered white shirts, stepped through the cleft in the bamboo to accompany me across the cotton fields. I was the only one present not in Sunday clothes, although I had donned fresh kakis. I am forever forgetting, -- and again forgot tonight, -- that the gentlemen eat first and the ladies afterward. The table was pretty, a shiney red cloth with a pattern of yellow leaves. A quart sized fruit jarholding a huge bouquet of cape jessamine dominated the center. We ate at 10, -- gumboof delicious flavor with mountains of snowy rice, followed by two huge platters of fried chicken, potato salads, a green salad and so on. "Cooley", -- an ice drink of water with orange coloring and flavor made the rounds during supper, and afterwards coffees and wine. Throughout the ladies stood immediately behind us, waving scarves to shoo away insects, attracted by the lights, and giggling and joining in the conversation of the men whenever addressed. No napkins cluttered up the board but from time to time the lady closest to the diner at her corner of the table would pass him a small sized Turkish towel, gay conversation flowing along, and servers and served all as happy as clams. The men, when finished, withdrew to an adjoining room for cigarettes while the ladies took our places at table. But it is late and I must fold and so goodnight

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Friday, June 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And then today the postman brought me your letter.....

I thought I found the one you penned Celeste to be perfect. Now I must admit that the one arriving today is, to borrow a good old French phrase I never understood: "Plus que parfait."

And particularly your phrases, so felicitously chosen, covering happy ~~xxx~~ hours at Yucca increase the preciousness of the one as it reflects and re-vivifies the other, seemingly like a great chandelier, reproduced in the surface of a great mirror, and then re-captured on the silver of another facing the first, and so the single item, reflecting back and forth endless down an avenue of immeasurable distance, with a perspective that at once delights and enthralls.

And thanks for telling me of your contact with little Miss Alberta and some of the more intimate details. As for her current physical complaint, this is not the first time she has been possessed of the same malady. It seems to me a year ago it was that she finally withdrew from New Orleans to spend a few weeks down somewhere on the Teche, denying herself contacts with others in order that she might the better "hold the thought" and so "prove" she could overcome her difficulty by sheer concentration on the Eddy opus.

I'm so glad I don't feel impelled to prove anything.

But how delightful that you found a magnolia to your liking. I may have expressed myself regarding Miss A.'s rendition of these flowers in previous correspondence. I think she will be remembered long for her artistry with magnolias and I have a feeling the Kinsey Melrose Magnolias will tend to increase in popularity as collectors' items as time moves along. Being as they are about the mightiest flower in the South, they have a perfect medium of reproduction in little Miss A.'s canvas, for she inclines to paint heavily almost everything she touches, and seldom does any ordinary artist ever succeed in achieving the heaviness of the grandiflora which little Miss A. catches so perfectly in her efforts. I am turly glad you found one to your liking and I think you will tend to like it more and more as you grow more and more accustomed to its presence. Then, too, and quite aside from its artistic merits, there will perhaps be the souvenir of the real ones, plucked from the same trees she has so long turned to for inspiration, and perhaps that memory, too, will serve to increase the value of the canvas for your own good self.

8434

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At Arenbourg the Josphine lilies have suddenly exploded with inordinate abandon, the uninterrupted high humidity seeming to have produced a luxuriance of blossoms exceeding anything I can remember. The privet hedge between the side gate and the public road has responded to the splendid growing weather, too, and already there are evidences in quantity that the privet has easily won the race with the Johnson Grass which only last week seemed to be so far in advance.

The ladies took off before big day for New Iberia. When I passed by the house about 9, they must have already been well into South Louisiana. Aurellia told me that Bessie had been taken to the hospital yesterday and the baby had arrived last night. It was a Caesarian affair and Aurellia didn't know if the child might be a boy or a girl. She seemed entranced at the prospect of having a second baby in the family to raise.

Brunhilda Coombs dropped in for a moment during the afternoon. She was on her way back to town from Alexandria where she had done some shopping for me to the extent of a half dozen little gold fish for the St. Gigin's fountain.

I have read one chapter of "A Basic History of the U. S." by Charles and Mary Beard, --two historians I have long admired for every thing they wrote prior to the 1930's when, by some strange twist, the husband, at least, seemed to fail completely to understand the implications of the Roosevelt Revolution.

In the present volume their pictures of the Europe of the 16th and 17th and 18th centuries is excellent, making clear as it does, how the convulsions of war, the survival of the feudal system and the dead end street of the average citizen of Europe in those years made western horizons, no matter how bleak and uncertain, seem to hold a promise that there might be a chance for the pursuit of happiness beyond the ocean as opposed to the impossibility of any such vain hope in the Europe where for generations the average individual had been getting no where fast. I was glad to run across that oft quoted line of Voltaire regarding the slow rise of the under privileged and the descent of the privileged few:

"History is full of the sounds of wooden shoes slowly going up-stairs and the patter of silken slippers coming down."

A couple of references made me want to know about the first Mrs. Pinkney of South Carolina, perhaps her maiden name was Lucas, who successfully introduced indigo culture into the Carolinas on her three plantations there, prior to her marriage. And about the first Frederick Phillips, and more especially his wife, -- owner of ships in the 1680's, both of whom were so successful in land and mercantile operations, their home being in the Yonkers neighborhood, and still standing, the last I knew.....

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*Melrose
scrapbook*

Sunday, June 18th, 1950.

Memorandum:

High heat....high humidity.....the place too cluttered up with people on Saturday.....not a soul on the place today.

Pat came home yesterday to pick up his new car and returned to Baton Rouge this morning. So did J. B. who will be gone for a couple of days, "attending an R. E. A. meeting", presided over, no doubt by a Montespan. Celeste telephoned from New Iberia to say she would not be home before Tuesday, and where the rest of the Henrys are, I wouldn't know.

Slap up at noon yesterday, Dr. and Mrs. Wilkinson appeared on the front gallery. He is the President of L. S. U. Press. With disarming candor they asked if I had dined. With equal frankness, I declared I had not and that I would not invite them to join me. The countered with the statement that they had to be in Alexandria for luncheon any way but Mrs. Wilkinson wanted me to tell her husband all about Melrose in 15 minutes. She had been here before with Annette Duchene, this was his first go-round.

I accordingly whisked them about at a speed surpassed only by the tour of the evening of the 7th instant, skipping three houses, and pausing only at the African House and Yucca.

Dr. W. seemed both floored and entranced at what he saw and heard. I was equally delighted at some of the things I learned from him, too, such as his intention to bring forth the Postell book shortly. In response to his query as to my opinion of Postell's efforts, I was glad to say I thought him one of the most profound scholars of the ante bellum medical field I knew.

The Postell discussion took place in the African House between ante bellum home made brooms and marble slabbed biscuit making machine. Then we did Yucca, not too sedately and my tongue going like the clapper on a bell. Dr. W. seemed to have become filled to capacity by the time he had attempted to absorb the back gallery. The unfolding of the doors to the Chapel was just too much for him, and he asked if he might side down in one of the pews for just a moment and try to catch up with himself.

It seemed to me that was the perfect time for nobody to talk, and so I fell silent. But he grabbed hold of the first interlude thus provided, saying that he had heard of Melrose a million times but never had the vaguest notion any place could be anything like the reality he had just breezed through. He asked me if I would do

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a book on it if he would publish it. I told him that up until that moment I had been under the impression I had been talking too fast. Now I was convinced that he was. He said he envisioned something with a flock of illustrations and a rather extended text and asked me --- just like that -- how I thought the thing should be done.

I told him that in my opinion, the thing should swirl around two pivotal points, -- the two ladies whose personalities brought most to bear on the place, -- the founding mistress from the Congo and the patroness of the Arts from Louisiana.

He beamed and asked me to ponder on the matter and that I would be hearing from him shortly.

On the way to the car, we talked general stuff. He says L. S. U. is shortly bringing out a serious biography of St. Denis by Mr. Ross Phares who, as you know, did some of his books at Melrose. Mr. Phares always reminded me, both in appearance and personality, of that youth who used to take care of 46th Street, Herr Kuhnun, or some such. I have never read a line of his historical studies but I have always assumed they would be more redolent with diligence than delight.

Fire flies are streaming madly, each his little lantern in his hand, across the backdrop of the bamboo hedge, and were you here, we should let our eyes be distracted by their magic streaks of light, describing the loveliest arcs, crossing and re-crossing each other's courses and sometimes all getting tangled up together in constellations as glowing and elusive as the Pleiades. But while we watched them, we might talk about possible forms to be considered in doing a Melrose book. I think it might be nice in the form of a scrapbook, full page pictures, pages reproduced from actual scrapbooks from the "adam's hand, excerpts from official documents, -- such as the emancipation of Marie Therese, the official statement of exports from the Natchitoches country in 1776, snapshots of the "adam, Sudham sketches, Kinsey masterpieces, a likeness of Emma, Grandpere's portrait and even one of Grandpa.

We might explore that idea and then contemplate another, a comparison and contrast of two great Melrose mistresses, with data and gossip fluffing up a few chapters. And then I would ask you if you would think 6 months or a year might be gone over and edited from a Melrose Memorandum, possibly major and minor points appearing say in the year 1948. I suppose contemporary books contain reproductions from contemporary diaries, perhaps a few dates from the "adam's for unique brevity and a few from our manuscript for extreme drawn-out-ness. I should listen intently for your honest opinion as to possibilities or impossibilities on such points. And if you have any ideas on the same, -- casual for the present, I should welcome them.

At sundown came the Rand daughters-in-law, bearing a tray encompassing a banquet. 't's Peter's birthday, -- 24, and I hope he passes this way to join me in having a go at the stuff.....

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Monday, June 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another June 19th, with all plantation operations suspended while the negroes frolic and the mulattoes, -- and particularly those living on their own property, working like mad, the negroes celebrating "us-es gettin' out from under bondage", and an exertion of labor by the mulattoes just to proclaim to the world that they have nothing to celebrate, since they never were in bondage.

Every year seems to bring forth a new crop of interpretations as to what anniversary June 19th is celebrated for, and this year I have learned that the slaves were freed on that day and that is therefore a purely negro holiday, whereas the 4th of July is honored by white folks exclusively because that was the day "they all got free". Among many of the negroes the failure to celebrate the 19th of June is taken as a sign that he who does not celebrate is trying to put himself into the same class as the white folks, and that it seems like sheer good citizenship for the negroes not to pay any attention to the 4th of July, since to do so would suggest to the white folks that this would be but a gesture indicating a desire to monopolize or share in an anniversary that is rightfully and exclusively belonging to the whites.

And so the thing spins on, year after year with annual variations of interpretations without anyone ever being able to explain the real reason for the selection of this day as the one for a racial frolic. Perhaps I have remarked before that the only racial legislation ever passed on this date had to do with eliminating slavery from the territories, -- as opposed to the States, -- of the United States. As there was little or no territory into which slavery could have possibly been introduced at the time the law was enacted, -- that is introduced with any hope of profit, the law itself seems merely to have been a bit of token legislation holding nothing of the vaguest import to any one. Some day I hope to discover how it was that this insignificant act instead of the Emancipation Proclamation got fastened on to this region as the one and only day in the year to glory in freedom from bondage, but as the years pass, that possibility probably goes fainter and fainter, as the originators of the scheme pass from the scene, -- if, indeed, that have not already done so, so that the origins are but completely lost in the shadow of custom.

Locally there was a baseball game scheduled for the afternoon. A team had engaged to come from Manny, up Shreveport way, to

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play Melrose. at 1:30. At 2 o'clock they hadn't put in an appearance and a telephone call revealed the Manny team had changed its mind. The last I heard, efforts were being made to round up a Natchitoches team, but I know not if it ever arrived.

A barbecue was also scheduled for the afternoon, immediately following the game. J. H. arranged for the purchase of half a beef at wholesale price in town. At 10 this morning the fire hadn't been kindled as yet, and what with the time required to barbecue half a beef, I suppose that section of the frolic ought to get under way sometime between midnight and dawn of tomorrow. It has always been evident that for local residents, times pieces were made more for decoration than determining a program, either for work or play, and today's preparations tend to carry out the point.

J. H. returned from Baton Rouge late this afternoon. He said he dropped by the Executive Mansion but didn't see Governor Long who is in bed. He did talk for a while with his Executive Secretary, the former Senator Fredericks, but remarked that as the latter prefers to tell tall tales even when the truth would do better, his discussion of local political doings was of little moment. I believe La Montespaigne is in the Bureau of Minerals, and so a call at the Capitol was, I assume, most natural. He said he was in the Chamber when the House agreed to put aside the bill calling on Editors to give the same position and amount of space to answers of politicians that is assigned to criticism of their doings by the press.

A rather large box containing various packages of crackers and cookies arrived from Sanger Brother's Company, of Dallas, Texas, address to me. I suppose this may be some house of Dallas, not unlike Charles in Manhattan. But as no card was enclosed and nothing on the address to suggest the name of the sender, I am at a loss to know whom to thank. So many people from Texas, and particularly from the Dallas-Fort Worth area pass this way, I can't imagine for the life of me from whom the gift may have come. Besides, I suppose, it might well have been ordered by someone living in some other city who may have chanced to have the package sent while passing through the place.

While it occurs to me, -- and I may have already mentioned it earlier, -- if you should run across a decree by the Governor covering the culture and processing of Indigo, possibly appearing in the volume, "Documents of Spain in Natchez", I should be glad if you would let me know. I merely mention this as it comes to mind and not because I am needing it at present, in fact any old time during the ensuing year would be amply early. It seems to me that eventually it might be used for elaboration on the line about the exportation of Indigo from this area in 1776.

But the hour for folding has come. The new moon slants dark shadows of the white pillars across the brick pavement and St. Giggins' Fountain while Grandpa slumbers peacefully on the old corn husk footstool along side your chair.....

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P. S.
enclosure from those little Cherokee numbers

Tuesday, June 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your perfectly elegant air mail to hand in this morning's post.

Before I forget it, let me admonish you not to rush into the article about the Pilgrim business. As the thing would probably be held for January or February publication if accepted, there is no need to do a whirling dervish about getting it into the Editor's hands, even though it may end up by having to pass through several such. I believe Colliers pays a little higher for articles than the Reader's Digest, and perhaps it would be well to let Colliers have a look at it first. They have printed so much stuff about this region through the medium of James Aswell, however, it seems to me quite possible they will not be likely to view it favorably for publication.

And thanks, while I think of it, for telling me so many interesting little side lights on your contact with little Miss A. Like Mrs. Rand, she seemed to find it impossible to imagine how any one could contrive a Chapel for others of any faith but one's own. I thought little Miss A. summed it up perfectly when she said:

"This is very nice but I can't imagine myself setting up such a place for any other faith than that of my own, - Mary Baker Eddy".

I declare if I only had the trappings to rig up a little shrine for the followers of Confucious, I would most certainly do so in the other projecting area at the opposite end of the gallery. Then the Kinsey-Rand Department would be busy as bees, casting about to find out if even though I had cut off my pig-tail, I still might be a Chinaman. Those belles are pure sights!

And thanks, too, for the clipping. And so Mrs. Roosevelt and Helen Ferris are stirring up a book together. It's a pity Helen is such a poor correspondent and I hesitate to write her on my own hook because she inquired about securing a couple of Clemence's masterpieces two years ago, in response to which I sent her the same with a little note. Perhaps she awaits an invoice before replotting, although I did think I might hear from her following the Madam's death. You can readily imagine, therefore, that I am leisurely in my impulses to take Under ood in hand in her direction.

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Although this note will not reach you until after your guests have departed, still I am "holding the thought" that you will not try to write during their presence in your neighborhood and that you will employ the aftermath for a breathing spell, not attempting to write any letters until re-adjustments to business routine and an opportunity for quiet to settle down on the domestic hearth, being assured that I shall understand the absence of a familiar hand from the post, and filled with satisfaction at the realization that you are manifesting the good common sense to conserve energy by every means possible.

Isn't grand that the snapshots came out so nicely. Off hand, it does seem odd that we didn't take more pictures, and yet I am not sorry on the other hand, for moments that might thus have been devoted to the camera were even better spent as they were, and while the Chinese adage about the merit of a picture over a flock of words is true, the sages of the Celestial Empire, I think, would be the first to concur in the thought that brief moments of human contact are ever so much more precious than the thinnest slices of time devoted to the pictorial record.

I sigh in sympathy in reading of all the duffle with which you were confronted on the arrival of the college youth. Every once in a while I find myself lifting an eyebrow at the dozen family portraits of the Belle family, parked in my bath room, not to mention all the furniture piled on top of the armoire and our bookcase from the old Jean Baptiste Metoyer house. But when I think of all the endless space in this domain and the definite limitations in any metropolitan apartment, I realize my problem is nothing while yours must be well nigh impossible.

Although I haven't seen them, I have evidence that the ladies across the fence have returned from South Louisiana. During the afternoon an Ethiopian arrived from her, bearing a vegetable dish in which swirled a flock of live gold fish. I tossed a couple of the darker ones into the aquarium here in the window by my desk, and dumped the balance into the big old iron sugar pot which now is swarming with them, what with the ones already there, plus the ones Madam Coombs brought by the other day. I'll bet a biscuit Madam Rand will put in an appearance before the week has run out, armed with a bucket of the same commodity. I have taken out a few of the water hyacinths so that, when sitting on Grandpere ancient pew, one sees a glory of fresh green with streaks of red gold cutting across the dark surface of the water. Before first dark, I sat for a while gazing at them with Grandpa perched on the edge of the pot, apparently as fascinated as I, but making no attempt to do any fishing. He likes to drink from the big old sugar pot and apparently regards his finned friends with the same detachment and good will as he regards his breakfast companion, the blue jay, over their saucer of milk.....

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Dora 6/17/50

Wednesday, June 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

Heat and moisture make the tropics and that is what we seem to have.

It rained here this afternoon but this morning there was a young cloudburst in the neighborhood of the Alexandria air port, which probably accounts for the absence of the Rands from their camp as is their want. And speaking of them, may I tell you how noble I think it of you to have been so generous as to send them a gift. I shall undoubtedly hear about it later in the week from them, but I shall not wait to tell you how much I think you deserve a citation and a flock of oak leaf clusters. Such things are rare and I have a feeling that it is particularly so for them, and I feel sure they will be deeply appreciative of your thoughtfulness.

Indirectly I heard something pleasant from down Magnolia way today. There are two granddaughters in that household, Betty, the daughter of Mat, Miss Sally's son, who runs Magnolia, and Sally Gunn, Miss Sally's daughter's child, the father being dead.

Betty Hertzog sailed for Europe Monday, along with some of her L. S. U. college friends. Mat expressed regret that little Sally couldn't go along with Betty, but said he couldn't afford to send both his niece and daughter. Another son-in-law of Miss Sally, Dr. Holbrook of New Orleans, a grandfather in his own right, heard about little Sally and the impossibility of her getting to Europe. Immediately he set wheels in motion and now little Sally, albeit belatedly, will be sailing in another week or so. Come to think of it, I believe it was little Sally's picture that figured in the Aswell article in Colliers a year ago.

I have never chanced to meet Dr. Holbrook, but that was no factor in discouraging my impulse to take Underwood in hand this evening and tell him precisely what I thought of him. There was something about his act that struck me as being so much like what you would do under exactly the same circumstances. And for the life of me, I can't imagine why I called little Miss Gunn Sally, for in reality her name is Mary, but there are so many Sallies in the Hertzog clan, I guess I must have thought one or more additional ones wouldn't make much difference. Somehow it seems part and parcel of my tendency to give children extra names, for Ed Rand's little girl's name is Ellen, and I always call her Mary Ellen for no reason, while Jackie's little girl is Winnie but I always call her Winnie M.

ay for no reason on the 21st.

4257

There were so many points in your letter coming to hand yesterday that we might go into endlessly that I skipped ~~xx~~ reference to many of them, and will touch on but a couple more at this sitting.

I am glad you saw some of little Miss A.'s abstract creations. She has done some here and often has called in Clemence to tell her what colors to put where. The creation of those compositions are a mystery to her, and the results of the creations seem to mystify everyone who sees them. After all, such compositions are merely efforts to harmonize and contrast colors, lines, solids and so on, and are no more masterpieces than strange noises made by a composer trying out different tonal effects by combining various notes.

As for her economic and political enthusiasms, she is ultra feudal in her concepts. She believes a few people should be allowed to get hold of and keep hold of all the money, for eventually they might spend a few dribbles for paintings which would be where she would come in. An Ohio Republican, she loves Senator Taft and hates the Roosevelts and is particularly wrathful about the efforts made during the depths of the depression to assist the destitute, -- she owned a house at the time, and to "prime the pump" that money might begin circulating again. In spite of her complaining about the programs, however, she has to admit that among the New Orleans artists employed on W.P.A. projects there was one by no other name than that of little Miss A. herself, -- which, you will agree, is pretty hilarious. It seems to have the same consistency as the merchant planter who complains madly about federal spending but is busy as a bee at lobbying for 2 billion dollar farm supports for Southern cotton, etc.

I shall enclose Dora's letter, coming to hand today, even though it doesn't contain much. His tirade against Father's Day affords me an opportunity to respond to him eventually quoting the radio advertisement of a Shreveport house, urging its listeners to purchase papa a suit for 23.50 for Father's Day, explaining, as an extension of credit and delayed payment, that one might make use of what they styled "the Lay Away Father's Plan". I think Dora will like that.

I forgot to report that the barbecue on the 19th was not a complete success, the beef not having been cooked or barbecued long enough, so that few people could chew it. But where the beef left something to be desired, the booze filled in, with the frolic coming to an end on a high note and with three gyloppies scattered across the ditches and spread over the cotton fields as evidence of a successful day.....

4258

Thursday, June 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum: I am enclosing for you a letter from Celeste. And so, if your ears burned along about 9 o'clock this morning, it may have been due in part to the conversation Celeste and I were having about you.

Celeste had just caught her breath to an affirmative answer on my part when she had remarked:

"I am running up to Dr. Knipmayer's clinic at St. Mathews to get my annual typhoid shot. Would you like to go with me."

I guess this must have been the first time I ever answered Yes to any question involving me and the big road, which accounted for her surprise.

And so we slid up the Bermuda Road to the clinic, and all during the trip she seemed impelled to speak of you and what a grand person you are. Everyone likes to hear pleasant things said about those one loves and today's go on your account was no exception.

Dr. K., on seeing us drive up, dropped everything and came out to greet us. He said he wasn't too surprised to see Celeste but he never dreamed I would venture so far afield. I was glad to have him show me about the place, for it is one of those institutions in which I have long been interested, have heard much about, but never before seen. The building, although not large, is adequate. There are three rooms, a large reception and waiting room across the entire width of the house and it is here that a receptionist interviews the patients, taking down their names and addresses and later enters whatever data Dr. K. gives regarding subsequent treatment. There are two rooms immediately behind this waiting room, one for examination, containing all the furniture, -- table, couch, etc., required, while the third room of the establishment, to the left of the consulting room, and immediately behind the waiting room, is set aside for treatment, with all the endless paraphernalia that goes to make up such a frightening place. It was there I was given my typhoid shot, and with neatness and dispatch was it accomplished. There are three assistants, -- the receptionist, the giver of shots, etc., who is white, and another who is colored, -- and a graduate nurse, as I understand it.

The plain walls of the reception room are gaily decorated with appropriate posters concerning health, posture, etc. I admired

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these, both for their artistic composition and for their striking messages. Later in the morning, when Dr. and Mrs. Knipmayer dropped by for the weekly chat and glass of wine, I express enthusiasm for the posters and they seemed pleased that I had admired them, for they had been busy chatting with Celeste while I was examining the "decors", and hadn't realized I had noticed them. I even went to such lengths as to express the hope I might have one of them, if ever new ones should be forth-coming to replace the old. Dr. K. said he had in mind to replace all of them this coming week with new ones just arrived and offered me whatever I wanted. I told him I would particularly like the one in black and white, - not so much for its artistic virtues as for its message. I propose to tack it up at the far end of the tub in my bath room where its terse message can easily be read. Every once in a while some panicky pilgrim asks to use the bathroom, and even Miss Alberta has made such a request. It is for her and dizzy bags like her that I shall tack up the poster, - the black silhouette of a baby's bust on a white circular background, the balance of the poster plain black with bold letters in white reading:

"Don't Giver Your Baby Syphilis."

I can scarcely wait for magnolia painting time next May when, in the course of events, little Miss A. will ask if she can use my bathroom, and immediately after entering, will come hot-footing it out, and with big starry, puzzled eyes, declared

"But I don't understand why you have put up that poster for me to read.....Why, you know that I have no baby....."

And now, after all this tomfoolery, may I refer to the attached duplicate of my letter to Dr. Wilkerson. You might glide over the errors of which I am conscious, a couple of interruptions having distracted me in the midst of sentences, but as for the burden of the thing, what think you. During the months ahead, you might keep this letter in mind, in case ideas concerning it should come to the surface or if you should stumble over any old snapshots that might be serviceable for the purpose outlined. Although "diaries" have been mentioned, I was careful not to say the Madam actually had one, but in the event, as you ponder on the matter, you feel excerpts from hers might give flavor to the piece without violating any personal points she might not have wanted in print, you might advise me on that subject and allied ones, as they come to mind. We don't have to rush into any of this business, but if we "set such eggs" in the back of our minds, it seems possible that something might eventually hatch out that would be worth while.....

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4260

Friday, June 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Hot sunshine, thermometer in the 90's and high winds, -- the latter not seeming to make much sense with the balance of the set-up, but that seems to be the lay-out, regardless.

The prettiest thing I have seen today, wishing I might share the same with a certain Miss Lee, is the veil of purple shimmering through the tender green of the water hyacinthes in the big old sugar pot. An explosion of flowers burst into bloom during the night and as the day progressed, the amethyst deepened as additional buds unfolded. There is something about their delicacy of color that seems to make more precious the various shadings of the green foliage, the purple flowers, the flock of goldfish on the sub-surface, - the whole contrasting so strikingly with the rough and rusty iron of the great pot and the ancient stone base on which it rests.

You will enjoy the little note from Helen and there was something about the superlative kindness in which she touched on expense accounts that reminded me a little of the exquisite fashion in which someone else I know can manage such matters with such touching delicacy.

I shall advise her by return mail that going any place this summer is out of the question but will suggest that she and Carolyn pass this way on their return from Gatlingburg. I reckon you may know the region, - which reminds me so much of the Asheville countryside. It is certainly a lovely locality and I think the two ladies should have fun. As for Gatlingburg itself, I never could wax enthusiastic about it. The narrow valley, reminding me a little of the Delaware Water Gap countryside, is delightful, but I never could see much to Gatlingburg itself, if the place I thought was Gatlingburg was really it. Long had I heard the place spoken of in such widely separate places as Boston and Wachuset, and somehow from what I hear, I conjured up a picture of something that would be like Saratoga, without the race track, - the Saratoga of ante bellum days, leisurely pilgrims, a big United States Hotel with great galleries running all over the place, wisteria and all that sort of thing. But I never could find much of a hotel and the pilgrims I saw, - and the natives, - were more on the Tobacco Road design than bayou gentry. Perhaps I was there at the wrong season. Perhaps it was my imagination that was at fault. In any event, I don't have to go to Gatlingburg.

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You would have been perfectly enchanted at the appearance of the circle drive at Arenbourg at dawn this morning. All the crepe myrtles were in their gayest festoons, white, purple, water melon red and pink. Thus enumerated, the combination sounds pretty terrific but somehow through adequate spacing and natural harmonies, they presented an impressive spectacle.

On my return, after a fair amount of physical exercise, I was all a-drip, and so, with a view to cooling off a bit before plunging into my bath, I decided I would do a little rearranging in my over extensive bath room. I divided it into two parts, doing nothing whatsoever to the bath section but turned the armoire around at right angles, backing it against the East wall, - on the front gallery side. This gives a heap of space for a flock of small chairs, a table by the window and easy access to the bookcase of Jean Baptiste, facing the window. It at the same time makes an extra little lounge in the house which certainly wouldn't seem necessary at first glance. But often I am in conference with one of my local friends when the hands of some such pass this way, and usually such an advent terminates the conference abruptly to nobody's satisfaction. This new development will therefore provide for a comfortable "withdrawing room", and so will serve a dual purpose, and will please me considerably.

I intended answering your letter of Friday last past in regard to your inquiry regarding a response to Sister's card. In my opinion, no response is imperative, but if one be made, I think I would say something about what a pleasant trip had been experience, and as this was the first one made South of the Carolinas, she can well appreciate how much it meant to be able to explore everything from Louisiana to Mexico City. From little Miss Alberta or somebody or other she will probably learn of your stop-over here, and so if you cover this area in some general phrase, such as emphasising the tour through Louisiana and on Southward, Melrose will be adequately covered. I voice this idea merely as the way I would handle it without giving it much thought, but any way you do it will be alright, and if you prefer to mention Melrose specifically, that would be alright, too.

And I intended congratulating before now on having run up on 530 Madison while in the Crescent City and to have had a glimpse at the Beauregard house which, to my way of thinking, is one of the best examples of the ante bellum town houses in the city. I continue to marvel at all the pertinent things you accomplished on such a brief tour. Surely you exceeded everything I ever knew of in all you absorbed in such a limited time. I think you're wonderful.....

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4262

Sunday, June 25th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I reckon Friday's Memo reaches your true hand at the same time this one does, as I shall post them both on the morrow. The postman was half an hour early on Saturday, and as he had departed before I marched to the store, I held back the 908 item for Monday mailing.

Assuming Dr. Wilkerson acts favorably on my letter to him, of which you have the duplicate, I shall have to begin casting about for suitable snapshots of the Madam. During the ensuing weeks, will you let your mind run over some of them that may have found there way to you. Please don't look for them now, but merely keep the matter in the back of your mind. In the event something by way of reproduction might eventually be in order, we can then concentrate on the matter. It seems to me there once was one of the Madam, Lyle and me, which Lyle styled "The Lame, the Alt and the Blind", - taken under the old magnolia by the side gate, and fairly clear. I saw one once of the Madam and her loom and another at her scrapbooks, each of which might be pertinent to the business contemplated, but I have no idea if any of these ever journeyed in your direction. At the moment none of these things need concern us much, --but as time goes on, and memory of this one or that comes to the surface, it might be well to make a mental note of them, just in case we should eventually have occasion to use them.

In the floral department, I have to mention something I have just learned by observation, and while it is of no interest, still I like to share it with you. I spoke of the water hyacinthes coming into flower the other day. They resemble the bulb hyacinth in that they stand straight up on a stem from 6 to 10 inches in height, with the individual flowers, of which there are several in the bunch at the top, being rather larger than the bulb variety, perhaps with a radius equal to the size of a quarter of a half dollar. But what I have learned about them, - having noticed it this year for the first time, is the fact that when the flowers have finished blooming, the stem automatically, and within the space of a few hours from the time the last flower has folded up, - the stem re-adjusts itself from its straight up posture to something suggesting an elongated "S". An inch above its base, at the surface of the water, the stem begins to curl downward, letting the upper part of the stem down into the water. About an inch from the top of the stem, where the remains of the faded flowers cluster, the stem curves upward, the curve part resting in the water, and the remainder projecting above the surface, from which point, I assume, the new plant begins to manifest signs of setting up housekeeping for itself.

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On the home front, the weather has been scorching,
which is supposed to be bad news for the boll weevil, and
not too good for humans either, although I seem to thrive
on it.

J. H. and Celeste dined in town today while I
dined with Madam Regard, and a jolly luncheon it was, too.

Dr. and Mrs. Rand came late this afternoon, bearing
a huge tray of what appears elegant items for my supper.
Among other things, I notice a home made meat pie, macaroni with
chunks of chicken in it, a bowl of shrimp salad, another
bowl of freshly stewed fruit, cherries, peaches, pineapple,
smothered in waves of whip cream, not to mention a slab
of angel food cake and so on. I hope I may get an appetite going
before folding-up time, for the white garden is lovely in
the moonlight and Grandpa is sitting on the edge of St.
Giggin's, and probably in a mood to assist me, even as
the old Miss Lee, if I eventually make up my mind.

I am sorry I didn't get a chance to chat with the Rands,
just as they arrived, some people from the college who
had telephoned on Friday to ask if they might come, dropped
in slap on the Rands' heels. I finished the Charles and Mary Bead Basic History
of the U. S. I wish they had terminated the piece with
the year 1908, for it seemed excellent up to that point, but
then started going hay-wire in my estimation. Their
treatment of Taft was more glowing than he deserved, I think,
and he tended to glide over the Wilson regime. The
Harding-Coolidge era skimmed but Mr. Hoover was trotted
out in a surprisingly favorable light, a courageous man,
industrious, far-seeing, efficient and praise-worthy, with
not the vaguest suggestion as to the paralysis that seemed to
render him moribund in face of the 1929-1932 disaster.
Roosevelt legislation was recorded but no reference, I think,
to the humanizing efforts of WPA and Mr. Hopkins wasn't
mentioned. I got the impression, reading the Hoover and
Roosevelt chapters at the same sitting that Mr. Hoover was
a fine humanitarian, imaginative and sympathetic, while
Mr. Roosevelt was a politician who did what any politician
even in like circumstances would have done. It was all just
a bit cock-eyed, and the more misleading because while most
of the salient facts were presented, the impression of the
guidance two men, as I understand them, was false.

Tonight I shall read the April Reader's Digest. I
must admit like the writicle about the 1793 plague of yellow fever in
Philadelphia, and the reference to Dolly Madison was a
surprise, as I hadn't expected to stumble over her in the
city of brotherly love and now for Grandpa and the moon....

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Monday, June 28th, 1950.
Memorandum:
Poor little Miss Lee.....and of all times, in such heat, to
have such an experience

And using the word last employed in the above paragraph, reminds
me of the remark I may have quoted from some sage in yesterday's memo:

"The trouble with Experience is that it is always teaching me
something I don't want to learn."

And I am astonished that lobster a la Newburg should have
such terrific results, for the stuff itself is so delicious, it seems
unimaginable that its aftermath could be so devastating.

Poor little Miss Lee.....I am so sorry for her, and I can
scarcely imagine what it was like, floundering around in Jackson Heights
with such a business turning a calm individual into the much talked of
"chicken on a hot griddle". I sincerely hope the medicine has
put a stop to the whole business and nothing of that nature may ever
manifest itself again.

And may I report that your Wednesday letter, - the 21st, - came
safely to hand in today's post, and that immediately upon reading
it, I attached the enclosed envelope in a little note to Ora which
will be posted to her at the same time this item goes forward to you.
As it seems to take about a day longer for mail to go the 15 miles from
here to town than it does for a letter to travel 1,500 miles, I have
no doubt it will reach Ora's true hand within a day or so from
the time this Memo reaches you. What with the 4th of July
following immediately thereafter, it seems to me we ought to expect
acknowledgement some time late next week, and I shall of course
long immediately to you on its receipt. I must say I
am so noble and so sweet of you to want to join with
others in this enterprise, and I know, too, that
a other gleaming in the crown, already so redolent
with the light of good deeds gleaming from that diadem.

Naturally I nearly fell out of my chair when I read of the remarkable

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coincidence of stumbling over Plumette, so long, running through years since you had seen her, so short a space since we had mentioned her name. It is good to know she is looking so well and so personable. I smiled to myself when you mentioned the white lie you told when responding to her inquiry regarding the chance you might have heard from any of our former friends of the old days. Something more stunning than the effects of lobster a la Newburg would have flattened her hout then and there on the pavement, had she had so much as a glimmering of what June 1950 meant for friends of the old days.

I referred to the April Reader's Digest in my note of yesterday. I intended mentioning a couple of articles I enjoyed, - the one about Sears, Roebuck and the other about socialized medicine, - the latter by Harold Stasson, which seemed to hold some positive suggestions. Up to now, the American Medical Association seems to have been dead set against any kind of health insurance, and thus in accord with the die-hard Republicans. But Stasson, being neither a medico nor a Republican admits there is a need for some solution of the present impossible medical jungle in which we find ourselves and goes a step further and while rejecting the British type, offers one means or another to solve the problem. So long as the G. O. P is in the hands of the Senator Tafts, it of course goes without saying that the Stassons will never get a chance at the party's nomination.

I am glad the package came through promptly, but isn't it odd one of little Lestan's amethyst glass items was broken, while the larger more ordinary bit of pottery traveled alright.

While I think of it, let me refer to the Spanish documents, for you will find many of them of little or no interest, save as they reflect the legal doings of the colonial period, and at the same time, you will find it perfectly maddening. I am sure, that never was a notation made as to how the controversies, detailed in these documents, were terminated. I recall one such, - and it is endless, along about the middle of the book, if memory serves, and had to do with establishing true ownership to a piece of ground or a line fence or some such. You may be as astonished as was I when in reading along gaily through the dull and confusing testimony, there is a most unexpected reference to "Mrs. Wimbushes' hat". The Madam was going along a mile a minute, reading this section to me aloud one day, when she read the sentence wherein reference was made to the lady's hat, and only after she had automatically read the words did she meaning strike her, whereupon both of us rolled on the floor. The killing part about the whole thing was that we never could find any other to la Wimbush and what she and her hat were tossed into these legal lines for, we never could determine.

The weather continues hot and marvelous and Arenbourg is thriving. Do go as slowly as you can these days and may there be no more Newburg ex business.....

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4266

re: Melrose Scrapbook

Tuesday, June 27th, 1950.

7/6/50

Memorandum:

A billion thanks for your thoughtful and cooperative air message in this morning's post.

I am indebted to you for several suggestions of which I shall speak below or at subsequent sittings.

First off, in response to your kindness in offering to run through the November, 1948 Journal, I ~~was~~ urge you not to do so during such a hot season and when the pressure of other demands is so constant. Do be kind to yourself and if you even consider the matter at all, merely let your mind drift over that period, weighing the wisdom of making use of the material at all. Frankly, I haven't made up my mind about it as yet, although when I wrote you about the scrapbook idea, it did occur to me that making use of some of that material, - if no more than an edited portion of the Memo for a single day, - November 18th, 1948, might give an authentic touch to the final pages on the Adam's career, - or at least supply a prolonged writing of the word "End" to the volume.

Of course we would want to eliminate everything not bearing directly upon the subject, - and it is quite possible that when such parts were removed or re-arranged, the residue might not mean much. Never writing to you except with you in mind, I haven't the vaguest notion how the stuff would look in print to one other than yourself. In view of the closeness of the bond of understanding between us, I can well imagine goals of stuff that would be imperative for the comprehension on the part of others may well not appear in a transcript of our own personal conversations from day to day. And so I leave the decision to you, and some time later, when less pressed on other fronts, if you care to glance over a page or two of that November 18th, it would be good to have your opinion. If it does seem to be useable, well and good, for it might retain the feeling of the year in which it was written, but on the other hand, it may be altogether too personal, either in the matter of confidences as between us or in regard to foibles of members of the family, etc., in which event we might leave the thing on ice for a while.

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And may I congratulate you on the excellence of your suggestion regarding the use of material, - the letters, - from the Carmolite volume. From what you have mentioned of them, I should think one or two of them, judiciously selected, would be excellent as an example of the reaction of such a striking personality as that of the Purple Lady to what she saw and felt on her visit to Melrose.

What is your opinion regarding what people like to read most, --a stark, unedited Diary, - I am thinking of the Madam's or the Journal of mine, --or do they prefer to have it fed to them between sentences and paragraphs of comment, as in the case of the Lestan diary. I suppose they prefer the latter, since probably the average reader hasn't sufficient imagination or is too unacquainted with circumstances and details merely touched on by the diarist, so that an understanding of the text requires elaboration. For myself, I usually prefer the straight stuff, leaving the interpretations for some biographer, but I guess most people like to have the stuff strung together, which probably for the average reader, makes the digesting of the same the easier. Under present circumstances, I couldn't very well do much by way of amplification, but I might be able to do so at some later time.

And your reference to what became of the Louisiana Scrapbook is timely. I believe Dora has it. Sometimes it would seem as though manuscripts are compiled and submitted for publisher's consideration at a time not propitious, and if set aside for a while, the proper and magical moment may strike when the rejected item is snatched at. I should think I might be expecting a response to the Wilkerson letter in a day or two. If he seems to like the idea of the Melrose Scrapbook, perhaps, when it has gone through the press, he may like the Louisiana one, too, --or even if he doesn't perhaps someone else may. I am glad you mentioned the matter, for it had faded so far from my memory that I should probably not have recalled it at all.

And may I congratulate you on having discovered the Governor's edict on indigo culture. What bright eyes you have and what diligence. But I pray you not to rush into a transcription, for time is not pressing. In fact I am currently trying to obtain a complete transcript of the 1776 Natchitoches Census and Export document, and I thought we might use both the Natchitoches documents, plus the Natchez elaboration on indigo culture, as filler for Part I of the Melrose Scrapbook. So you see there is no rush at all on the thing, and, should you not have already forwarded it, you might retain the transcription and I will send you the Natchitoches thing when it comes to hand, so that you may toss the two along side by side and see how they harmonize.

So much to talk about, and yet, although limited in remaining space, I must tell you how marvelously the gardenia continues to thrive at Arenbourg. 12 new blossoms this morning, 6 for tomorrow.....

3388

4268

Cape Jasmine

Memorandum:

I believe your copy of Documents of Spain in Natchez does not include the data, jotted down on the accompanying sheet. A couple of interruptions prevented me from getting in down as I wanted to, but perhaps you won't mind making a transcript of it, - including whatever corrections are necessary, assuming that you may find the notes of sufficient interest, as throwing some light on the volume itself, as to make them worth putting on a couple of separate pages and perhaps pasted in the front of your volume.

Last night I intended responding to a question in your last letter regarding gardenias, but suddenly I discovered I had already reached the limit of available space, and so I shall touch on that matter while fresh in my mind.

As I understand it, *Cape Jasmine* is the genus and *Gardenia* one of the species or varieties. The plant was first known to Europeans through accounts of it from sea captains who had transported it to the South African Cape of Good Hope sometime prior to the discovery of America. It is said that the reports reaching Europe from the Cape described the plant as having been brought from China and that its perfume greatly resembled the jasmine flower with which Europeans were already familiar. The plant thrived in Southern Africa in the years following its arrival from the Orient, and although it had been frequently described by travelers in Europe who had seen it in the Dark Continent, it was not successfully transplanted in England until the 17th century. It was because it had so long been described as a plant of jasmine like perfume, found in gardens on the Cape, that on reaching the British Isle it was styled "Cape Jasmine".

Subsequently a number of varieties appeared in England, one of the most celebrated types having been forwarded to the Royal Society by Dr. Gardener of Middleton Gardens on the River of South Carolina, a horticulturalist of distinction who had imported this particular variety from the West Indies direct for the Middleton family. In appreciation of Dr. Gardener's thoughtfulness in sending this heretofore unknown variety of the genus "Cape Jasmine", his gift to the Linnaean Society was given the name, "Gardenia" in the doctor's honor.

Personally, I am not sure, but I think I know the

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Gardenia when I see one, and I believe we have one at Arenbourg. It is but of from small to medium size and is often the type of Cape Jasmine sold by florists in Northern cities of the U. S.

It is particularly well adapted for boutonnières, for it has the virtue of nestling upright on one or more of the leaves growing on the same stem. Some varieties of the Cape Jasmine tend to hang down their heads and do not all put forth their flowers near the contrasting evergreen leaves of the plant. Your Cape Jasmine, growing near the prospective gallery at Arenbourg is one of the finer types I have seen. It is a "Fortuni", and as you know, is not small but does not hang its head. Furthermore the center of the Fortuni presents a larger flower than the comparatively tight knit Gardenia, and the Fortuni is embellished by a circle of petals forming a generous frame about the ample flower in the center.

In response to your inquiry as to which name I like better, - the genus, "Cape Jasmine" or the specie, "Gardenia", I must say I haven't much choice. "Gardenia" I have heard for so long in Northern climes, and long before I knew it was but one type of Cape Jasmine, that "Gardenia" seems ever so natural to say whenever speaking of any of the several types. But in the deep South, and especially in circles made up of the noblesse of the old school, - Dr. Butler, Miss Gammie, all of old "atchez, Miss Nellie and so on, one never hears anything save "Cape Jasmine". New-comers to the South and the unsocial or untutored whites often refer to the whole business as "Gardenia", and if I remember correctly, Charleston, in the upper social brackets and old time intellectuals incline to refer to it as or them as "Gardenias", probably as a hold over of Dr. Gardener's influence on the horticultural community in the 18th century. But what has always impressed me profoundly both in Mississippi and Louisiana is the fact that while this flower is a favorite among colored people, and is the one flower which all of them seem able to call by name, I have invariably heard them mention it as a "Cape Jasmine", and never, I think, have I heard a negro say "Gardenia". Only a week ago a little boy not more than 7 or 8, bowed to me as I was returning from Arenbourg one morning, and with a beaming smile said:

"That sure is a pretty Cape Jasmine you're toatin'."

The child comes from a family, none of whom know from B., and I firmly believe none of them know the name of a single, solitary flower, save the Cape Jasmine. And this is a bit of the fact, as I check on just for fun later, that Cape jasmines grow within miles of the home of this family. Remarkable, don't you think, what with magnolias for competition and the name "Gardenia" seemingly so much easier.

All runs smoothly in these parts, with a slight shower to cut the intense heat this noon. Don Worsley came yesterday and today with Californians, dying to take pictures.....

4270

4270

Thursday, June 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Celeste came by just as sun down, bringing no end of food, sent by Blythe Rand for my supper.

Having had one already, let us hope somebody or other liking shrimp salade, egg plant, three kinds of rolls and chicken, passes this way.

Celeste had been at the Rand camp all day, where a card party had been under way since ten this morning.

Celeste stopped off here long enough for a cigarette with me on the back gallery. She said:

"Mrs. Rand said she had such a lovely letter from Miss Lee..... and a lovely gift.....a lovely box of chocolate and lovely handkerchiefs.....Miss Lee is such a lovely girl....and so pretty, too....."

So there you are and if you never hear from the Rands, as is quite probable, since they have never been known to write letters, you will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that your several kindnesses were acknowledged and appreciated, even though it was but by word of mouth.

Personally, I can think of no satisfaction equal to the deep down delight in hearing second hand that one we love is so admired by others.

Today's post was curious. I had expected letters from Ora and Dr. Wilkerson but received notes from Robina, Mr. "arness, etc., and some books from the New Orleans Public. The latter were timely. I thought, since I had completely run out of stuff, and I was accordingly surprised when the books turned out to be three different items I had finished a week back and returned several days ago.

You will get a mild kick out of the going-over given that woodsey sprite, little Miss C. Dormon. The letter covering that case was obviously written in a rush, but in spite of that, the observations were telling set forth, it seems to me. The circumstances under which the letter, following a shopping trip, was written reminded me of something Lyle once said:

"There sat Robina, with a firm grasp on herself but gently perspiring....."

0754

4271

Locally plans for the impending week end have been altered. The S. G. Henrys, Jr., reached Baton Rouge from Germany today, and as a round of parties are in order forthwith, plans for the two families for coming to Melrose for a week and have been postponed until the 8th. The Joe (Texas) Henrys have been advised, but no one knows if they will come through on the present or fore-going schedule, or will delay until the 8th. Je's birthday is on the 4th and a couple of extra cakes had been planned, but that is about all.

I am hoping the Texas numbers will come this week end and the Baton Rouge tribe on the following one, for the spread will make it more pleasant for everyone, now that the thermometer has climbed so high and crowding has its disadvantages.

I just glanced out of the window and am convinced the moon must be full tonight, there is such a golden glow over everything and the sundial stands out so distinctly against the glow-worm decked bamboo beyond. This morning I replaced the cannas at the base of the pillars along the gallery, - there were yellow and reds there, if you recall, and today's new contingent are all white. They stand out like great luminous frosty stars in the marvelous shadow cast by the equally marvelous moonlight. I can see Grandpa sitting on the edge of the basin of St. Giggins' fountain and suggesting a big old yellow and white canna, spilled over on to the gallery. Off hand I might assume he might be eyeing me to suggest I join him for companionship, but keeping my ego under mild control, I realize perfectly well that he probably catches the faint aroma of the shrimp salad and probably has thought up a good idea, - to wit, that I eat the salad and share the shrimp section with him.

The news commentators certainly had a break in a dull season when the Korea episode flared. I heard some wise-acre going full blast last night, explaining how the United States was solidly backed up by such members of the United Nations as El Salvador, Guatemala, etc., which may have been solid in their backing but it did sound as though there wasn't much bulk.

The Louisiana Legislature continues its bill tomfoolery, and the Governor, addressing the Legislature the other night, paused once or twice to take medicine. Dr. Knipmeyer today observed that he never heard of a case requiring doses in such rapid succession that anyone addressing the public gathering couldn't wait until concluding before taking out the medicine dropper and having a go at the stuff. The Governor, asking J. H. to do him a favor, has been telephoning all afternoon and early this evening, but he'll have lots of opportunity to take intermittent doses before he or anyone else catches up with J. H.

0754

4272

*pictures to
Yucca
- adg.*

Friday, June 30th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How good are you.....and God.....and the postman.....

This morning came your grand letter and the accompanying gift of photographs. They are wonderful, both items, and I couldn't begin to tell you how much pleasure they have afforded me.

The one photograph I like best is the one with you in the foreground and the Lombardy poplars in the background.

Botticelli's Venus on a seashell rising from the sea I have always liked. This snapshot is wonderful and quite out does the Renaissance master in my affection. The lights and shadows in the foreground are just right for bringing out the most important feature of the picture, and I shall forever be indebted to you for all the happiness this likeness will hold in store for me in the days to come.

The ones taken on the gallery at Yucca are alright, too, and I think the lights and shadows you caught in the one of me quite remarkable, while the St. Giggins' Fountain and its old grind stone base, - and even old St. Gigg himself and the surrounding foliage is wonderfully clear and decorative.

I wish there had been more sun for you and the Cane River Gobelin, but perhaps it is nicer as it is, there seems to be such a pleasantly subdued background for little Miss Lee, and I am glad the punka appears in the upper left to carry out the Southern setting. With about an inch taken off the right of the picture in this size, - where the window shows, we shall have left a pleasant composition which eventually we may use to advantage as an illustration for ye olde plantation and its people and its handiwork.

You are certainly to be congratulated on the one you took of the big house, showing your door, for it is seldom one gets a picture from that angleshowing the steps, that comes out well.

As for the Arenbourg ones, I like all of them and they seem remarkably clear. I don't find they have too much sky, for lots of sky is a dominant feature of this delta country and I am inclined to think the presence of plenty of it in the pictures adds to their charm and authenticity. The one looking towards Celine's house is a pure Fragonard combined with Millet, while the ones of the river seem beautifully framed by existing flora. E. B. Johnston, H. Baldwin and C. Ramsey had better look to their laurels when you step out with your camera.

4273

The letter from Dr. Wilkerson, looked for yesterday, arrived today. I have made a mighty poor transcription of it, enclosed herewith. Don't bother to save the copy, as I shall send the original along a little later, supposing Joe Henry may come this week end and would like to see it, as he is more interested in such business than the others.

Off hand, I should say Dr. Wilkerson's reaction is favorable, so you see your prediction in your letter arriving in the same mail was correct.

I shall respond to his letter in a day or two and send you the duplicate so you may be kept abreast. I shall withhold any mention of the Old Louisiana Scrapbook until after the Melrose one gets under motion, feeling that once the latter is accepted, the former might move along in the right direction as a matter of course.

In none of this business, let us and particularly and most especial you, not let us get into a rush about doing things. It is so wonderful of you to so generously assist in the creation of the manuscript, but I pray you not to let it make enervating demands on you when you have so many prior claims to your energies.

From time to time I shall feel quite free to mention possible items that may or may not be used in connection with the Melrose item, on the assumption that you really will not let the mere mention of them start you hunting for things when you might much better be relaxing. A case in point is a letter you may have, - or may not, - and I pray you not to start trying to unearth it immediately, - the last letter Lyle wrote, probably in April, 1945, or was it '46, wherein he spoke of his affection for the Madam. As I recall it was typed and on a sheet of paper a couple of inches smaller both in length and width than this sheet. I don't recall its precise wording but it seems to me it might be an example of his affection for the Madam that would do honor to both of them. Please don't start searching for it, but in case you do sometime run across it, just glance through it and decide if you think it suitable material.

Frankly, I think I shall have to labor mightily to keep the scrapbook character of the impending opus fresh in the Wilkerson mind. In order to keep the thought in the foreground, I shall place whatever material comes to hand in a scrapbook in the chronological order to be used in the printed volume. Perhaps this tentative arrangement will tend to impress Dr. W. with the idea that the story is to be told in pictures and excerpts rather than literary composition. Using this method, it will therefore be comparatively easy for us to send the work back and forth to each other from time to time as the pot approaches the boiling stage. But I must close for tonight. Again my thanks to you for having brought me such a happy day and souvenirs for so much happiness in days ahead.....

4274

Sunday, July 2nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Did somebody once say that the most subtle form of flattery is imitation.

Well, be that as it may, I am told the Holy Ghost fathers across the river at St. Augustin's Church had heard much talk about the Chapel of the Blessed Martin at Yucca, and one day last week they confided to Miss Sally, when dining with her at Magnolia that they had decided to contrive a Chapel in the Rectory so that on hot days or cold ones, it will not be necessary for them to go out of the house and across the 15 foot greensward to the Church hard by, but may remain under their own protecting roof and perform whatever services of a religious nature are required, and particularly when the concourse of people in attendance is small.

What surprises me is that they never had one before. Dr. Kripmeire declares they never would have had one at all if there hadn't been so much buzzing about the Yucca one, -- the presence of which seemed to get into the perruques of the Holy Ghost reverends who felt that the Clerics most certainly ought to have such a business if even a non-conformist like me could stir one up.

The other enclosure speaks for itself. It brings up a point I should have mentioned in my last letter. Don't you think we might transcribe the paragraph from her last letter before this one, wherein she mentions quite spontaneously the influence the Madam had on her life. It seems to me this may supply excellent direct quotation for the Scrapbook, for it must have the ring of authenticity, although I have already forgotten its precise phraseology, and accordingly it may well supply precisely the note we may need to best express what Dr. Wilkerson had in mind when he referred to the influence Melrose and the Madam exerted on cultural points. And so, if on glancing at the former letter, - just preceding the present one you find it does make this point advantageously, you might jot it down and keep it in the envelope you are gathering together on such points, - L

I believe I ran off the track as I approached the bottom of the page. The fact is that I am holding this conversation in utter darkness. A curtain of black clouds rolled up from down Derry way along about first sun down, with much lightning and torrents of rain. One bolt apparently knocked out the electric connections in this area, for the current has been off a long time with the net result that the radio, reading machine, etc., are all having a complete rest tonight.

Of all the outlander Henrys, only Pat showed up for the week end. I had assumed there would be many more pilgrims than have thus far put in an appearance. I shall be surprised and delighted if I may repeat the same statement a week from tonight.

We dined across the fence today and talked turned to North Carolina whereupon Celeste brought out the little trade publication Ford Times, which Mrs. Rand had sent me by her the other day. In it is an article about the impending Gatlingburg Fair. It is an interesting article and makes everything about it sound ever so interesting from the human side of the native participants. But I am so glad to be able to read about it rather than having to attend.

I notice several new little leaves on the camelias at Arenbourg and a flock of tender festoons atop the grandiflora, so after tonight's rain, everything should be leaping in our favorite gardens by the dawn's early light. The present season, I think, has been more favorable for growing things than any I can remember and let us hope everything climbs mightily no wonder.

quite late. I saw Ed Rand for a moment at the store this morning and he said he was remaining here until Tuesday night or Wednesday morning. He seems to have quite a job cut out for himself tomorrow morning, for he lost a motor from one of the speed boats and therefore plans to go fishing for it on Monday. I never did go fishing for engines, but I should imagine it might be a dull business, especially if the engines weren't biting much. I believe the boat was on the river the moment the engine jumped over board, and so it may well be in deep water, - or possibly deep mud. I believe the river is about 60 feet deep just below the camp. Don't you think we ought to lend Ed Rand St. Giggins as a worthy aid to his project.

Monday, July 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

A long hot day, and withal busy, both at Arenbourg and Melrose in the horticultural section.

Tonight I took up an album of snapshots, covering the 1920's, and several items have come to hand which we may be able to use to advantage in the Melrose scrapbook. The only item other than snapshots are the printed columns of an article Lyle wrote immediately after his first visit to Melrose. It isn't dated, but I shall be able to determine that point later. The whole article we shall not want to use, for it has a lot of stuff in it about his trip down from Wathitchoes, a stop off at Bermuda and details about sights along the road between there and here. And much of the details about Melrose included in that first article may be omitted, too, but I believe the major portion of the piece, his first impression of Aunt Cammie, etc., and an enumeration of her children will make very desirable details. On the same page is a snapshot of Aunt Cammie and Lyle, in a very informal but rather charming posture, and that, I should think, might also find a place in the book.

I was also delighted to discover a number of snapshots of Aunt Cammie and some of the pieced or patch work quilts on which she had an enthusiastic "go" over a period of years. There is another of her sitting on a bench with her favorite dog which also may lend itself to publication.

I shall examine the photographs further on the morrow, and we shall see what we shall see. In the mean time, I am delighted that these items have been brought to light, for the quilt association will carry out the point of her interest in that branch of handicraft while the one with Lyle is so gay and charming that it will lend itself nicely to the patroness of letters section.

On the back of a photograph of old Marco, written in Lyle's hand, is an account of the Marco home, a reference to Eddie Suydam having sketched it and of Aunt Cammie getting some doors from the place as a surprise for Lyle, the doors being used on the back gallery of Yucca. I count these finds as fortunate for a day devoted almost exclusively to gardening, being more or less off hand.

4277

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And sometime when you think of it, --or rather when you chance to have an opportunity to do so, --and there is no rush whatsoever, you might make a note, for subsequent requests that I may make more than once, for that 14th verse in some chapter or other in The Bible, -- could it be Proverbs, --the one we have spoken of before, having 31 verses in all, the several thus being applied by some people as the verse who application should apply to those on whose birthday the appropriate verse falls.

I think we may have some occasion to quote this verse in the scrapbook as applying to Aunt Cammie, --something about "Like the merchant ships, she bring food from afar..." or some such.

Off hand, I don't exactly know where or how we may use the above, but it may well come in advantageously, don't you think.

But I should apologize for all this talk which certainly must make mighty dull reading, and besides and worst of all, there will probably be endless pages just like it or even worse in the days ahead.

Last night's thunderstorm came back in force again early this afternoon, but never touched this section while dumping six tons of thunder bolts and rain on "atchitoches to the North and Cloutierville to the South. All day long the tractors have been going in the cotton, dusting six rows at a time wit some kind of poison that isn't unpleasant to human nostrils even though it is supposed to be deadly to insects breathing it. The tractors concentrated on the fields immediately beyond the bamboo just at first dark and now, a couple of hours later, the air, both inside and outside on the gallery is heavy with the stuff. It tends to make the eyes smart a little, but only mildly, and the game is worth the candle for the insecticide is said to be deadly on mosquitoes for miles around. I certainly hope our firefly friends in the bamboo are immune to it, for I should certainly miss their nightly chasings about with their little lanterns all a-glow.

Many parties seem to be in the offing, -- tomorrow, Wednesday and Friday and the Baton Rouge contingent arriving on the same day. It's a pace that doesn't kill me, since I incline to remain on my own side of the fence when Marie Antoinette starts putting ships in her hair and heading out with the Colignacs for a dab at card-cutting.

I saw Aurellia today. She says Bessie is home after her Caesarian operation and that her second child, -- another boy, is fine. She said the children's grandmother said to the elder child, now 3, that she was happy to have two babies for grandchildren now. But the older boy immediately proclaimed: "I ain't no baby no more,the other one is the baby and me, I'm now a pair of pants."

4278

4278

Old La. Scrapbook

Memorandum: Tuesday, July 4th, 1950.

How wonderfully quiet it has been today, ne'er a fire cracker, ne'er a pilgrim.

The absence of fire crackers is no surprise, what with such noises for no known reason being reserved for Christmas. But the horizon unflecked by pilgrims is a horse of another hue, and I still can't account for it, but am nevertheless thankful.

The enclosures speak more or less for themselves. To tell you the truth, when I was advised by the Dallas house of the identity of the person who sent the crackers, I hadn't the vaguest notion who the lady might be, for it chanced that three ladies within a week or so passed this way from the Texas area with nephews. And so it was only with today's note and the mention of Helen that I placed the writer, who, if memory serves me and I read between the lines of her letter correctly, is in the nautre of a bag.

Still, what with your mention so recently of the Old Louisiana Scrapbook manuscript, it seemed to me this might make an ideal opening, and so I have responded to her in the vein indicated by the enclosure, and I have sent along a copy to Dora so he may be fortified against a possible approach by Macmillan. It would certainly be odd if the manuscript, after being so long on ice, should suddenly be given favorable consideration.

Pat returned to Baton Rouge right after dinner and Dan went somewhere or other. Celeste, of course, went to the frolic on the island at Magnolia and J. A. and I had supper alone. It all worked out much to my satisfaction, and the absence of hurly-burly gave me an opportunity to get a heap of stuff done both at rebourg and Heloise in the gardening department, and a flock of letters to this one and that, with a few to rounding up data on the Heloise scrapbook. I also took occasion to do some more exploring for local material, and found a number of items of a pictorial pattern that may come in handy.

I wish you might have been with Grandpa and me this evening about first dark. We were sitting on the back gallery doing nothing in particular. As a matter of fact I was sitting on the bench having a leisurely cigarette and Grandpa was fiddling around in the giant's bear, jumping at over-frisky June bugs. And then, Lo! the gayest full grown black and white skunk quite unexpectedly put in an appearance, issuing from the butterfly lily bed just as tame as could be. Although I hadn't known of the friendship before, I concluded these two, - the skunk and Grandpa, must be on very amicable terms, for the skunk hopped over the edgeing on to the gallery and Grandpa momentarily forsook his June bugs to stroll over and rub noses with his little friend. Both of them seemed satisfied that all was in order for in a minute or two Grandpa returned to the Giant's Beard and the skunk hopped back on to the greensward, nosing along in search of supper, I suppose. Now if we can invite the old Blue Jay to join these other two at bug hunting, we really ought to have an unusual triangle.

I am going to have to make up for today's respite from pilgrims when tomorrow rolls round, for Celeste is entertaining for luncheon, I believe, --three ladies from Shreveport and two from Magnolia. I declined the invitation for dinner at high noon but will undertake a tour as a gesture of cooperation.

As inline with the normal program, there is much card cutting scheduled in town for Thursday and Friday, and as the little and big S. C.'s and wives will arrive sometime Saturday morning, that day will be fairly full for the hostess who will have them and other members of the family to dine and this will be followed by something or other in town, with cocktails at Dan's, as I understand it, and dinner and Paynie's, and beginning with Saturday dinner, I am declining all, and if the youth and maiden just home from Bavaria after 2 or 3 years don't wish they were back at Linderhof or some such, then they must be cut out of the same bolt of cloth that wears best in the constant whiz offbridge, biscuit and beau monde.

I had better get a move on an respond to the Wilkerson letter, I reckon. Perhaps I shall toss that off tonight - or take a whack at it on the morrow. But mail is going to be light so far is general averages ~~great~~ ago, what with comparatively few people, I imagine, devoting much time of this prolonged week end to pen pushing. I hope your day has been one of relaxation and rest, and not too much jaunting to Smittown or where ever, and no lobster a la New burg.....

mi ~~Ex-100-100000~~ day I 340 Street of Tuesday, July 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A long, hot, humid day with oceans of sunshine and breakers of pilgrims.

Heavy clouds hung low on the Southern horizon all day, and I assume the Alexandria air port may have been getting a wash out. Tonight the clouds have moved up in this direction, but I am glad I watered things madly both at Arenbourg and Melrose, for all the swirling storm clouds may turn out to be nothing more than "a flash in the pan".

I send the enclosure so you may get a laugh from the salutation. I was impressed when I saw the envelope and even more when I got to the first line of greeting. I must denude myself of my clerical garb and throw away my long whiskers, for Dr. Holbrook is reputedly one of the South's foremost psychiatrists, and I most certainly don't want to be guilty of misleading him as to my position in the local set up. I suppose more than one Chapel has created a priest, but I had always supposed it was the other way around. Having used Estate stationary in dropping this most excellent man a note of congratulation, I can't for the life of me imagine who he got the impression I might be a Holy Ghost, and I certainly made no reference to religion or houses of worship or anything of the sort. I used to think it mildly amusing when Herr Kelly and I were want to exchange Germanic prefixes but this unexpected Father M. quite unhinged me.

I fulminated in my beard this afternoon when when six or 8 guests with their hostess from across the fence honored me with a two hour visit. I had just one billion things to do and a couple of untutored gardeners running wild in the iris garden, presumably giving attention to the Chinese magnolias but just as likely as not slaying everything in sight except the two items they were supposed to be concentrating on. But perhaps the enforced two hour relaxation was good for the repose of the body if not for the will to labor, and I had done enough when first dark arrived regardless.

0834

4281

And I am pleased to report that I was successful in rounding up some more photographic material for the Melrose Scrapbook. I am especially delighted to have found an excellent picture of the Madam, madly weaving at her loom. It isn't a glossy print but I believe a reproduction can readily be made nevertheless. I also discovered a whole batch of letters and articles that had been set aside by the Madam for eventual entry into a Melrose scrapbook, and I have no doubt exploration of these items will produce some suitable, and I trust, some striking data.

When fiddling about in the African House this afternoon with people from Alexandria, Virginia, I glanced at the picture of Emma and the thought occurred to me that since we have a glossy print of that portrait, we may find it convenient to use it and the short article as filler. Would that strike you as useable, in case we ran short of other more interesting material.

I ran across another item which may prove interesting, - perhaps 30 or 40 pages in an item, - a book, I should say, not unlike a guest book, wherein various people have written from a few words to a whole page of their impressions of their hostess and her home. It would be impractical to photostat all this with a view for using them as illustrations, but if each were typed out and put under an appropriate heading, don't you think they might lend interest to the volume. Some such heading for the collection might read:

"What Others Had to Say" or some such.

When here in May, little Miss Alberta one day said to me:

"You know the Madam didn't know anything about painting. But when I had some problem about color or arrangement or lighting or anything of the sort, I could leave my canvas and go and talk for half an hour with her, after which I could return to my brush, having discovered that somehow or other in her conversation with me she had solved my problem for me."

I thought this an interesting point and have written 823 Royal, asking little Miss A. to tell me the same story again in her next letter. If she does so, I think it might lend a certain tone to one phase of the business at hand. But forgive me for burdening you with all this speculation. If you feel any strong negatives about any of it, please say so, otherwise just play I haven't said anything.....

0834

4282

Thursday, July 6th, 1950.

Memorandum:

To hand in this morning's post came your grand letter, together with its enclosure from the Spanish Documents.

I have read the letter with relish, and twice over, but have not run through the enclosure as yet, but will do so on the morrow. And in the mean time, may I say thanks again and billions.

Your program during these sweltering days, sounds terribly arduous. By now let us hope all the migratory birds have been able to wing their way Southward and that you have momentarily, at least, found time for a second or two, for a momentary breathing spell when you can call a minute or so your own. Surely it will mean much for the American visitors to get back home which, after all, is the best place for recuperation. I should imagine, and in having accomplished that purpose, they will automatically be conferring a favor on those who would attend them so long as they linger on in foreign climes.

Perhaps later tonight, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps early next week, I shall get off an acknowledgement to Dr. Wilkerson's letter. The more I contemplate the matter, the more convinced I am that I shall merely thank him for his letter and speak of my pleasure in assembling material for The Melrose Scrapbook. I shall neither state nor imply anything about a publisher. If memory serves, there was some phrase or sentence in his letter to the effect that the volume might enjoy some popularity. Assuming this to be true, then it seems to me all the labor involved would not of necessity be of no benefit to anyone, but quite the contrary, if properly handled, it might well be to the mutual advantage of both the L. S. U. Press and the author, and for just that reason I think I shall continue to labor mightily to get the material together, and then, after seeing what the finished product looks like, decide what kind of an arrangement may be made that will be fair to them and to us.

Naturally, if the thing turns out to be of scant interest, save to limited cultural groups in Louisiana, then the plantation might well consider it worth while to pay the L. S. U. Press to publish it, since there could be no hope of any popular demand. But if, on the other hand, the thing should shape up as a

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gift item, symbolic of the best old Southern plantations stand for, and accordingly enjoy the demand of the average tourist and lover of old plantations anywhere, then the tune should be a little different, and the score written down before the piece is presented to the general public.

But enough of such speculation. We shall continue to hush to the line, - I guess it is "hew" to the line, and when we begin to see light, we can be guided accordingly.

There have been intermittent showers all day, making it an excellent time for weed-pulling interspersed with rest periods. And did I pull weeds at Arenbourg.

Tonight, as I headed for the big house for supper, a perfume brought me to an abrupt halt and an immediate examination of the butterfly lily situation. As you know, there are a goodly spread of stalks near the end of the gallery and it took me a second or two in tracking the first blossom down. I had supposed one of the larger plants would be the first to unfold its lovely cargo, but none of the 8 foot ones have developed that far yet. Then I reduced my sweep of the horizon to a 6 foot level and there beneath the canopy of an over-hanging elephant ear, I found the lovely blossom. And so, from this July 6th until a fairly heavy frost in late November, possibly December or even in to January, white ghosts of butterflies, with apologies to Anne Parish, will be freighted Yucca atmosphere with their heavenly perfume. Isn't it odd that Lyle, who liked white flowers and heavy perfumes never did plant a single solitary butterfly lily at Yucca during the couple of decades he lived here.

I am reading a book which I like ever so much at its start, - "A Man Called White" by White, the author being a man, reared in Atlanta, with white skin and negro, --probably mulatto, --parentage. I believe it is a 1948 publication and you are probably well acquainted with it, so I shall spare you the pain of details except at such points in the reading as I am particularly struck by some point or other the author may make.

The enclosure from poor Miss Nellie remains pretty much of a mystery to me and each of my secretaries. I pray you not to struggle with it, if you, too, find it up-hill going. As I have never had an acknowledgement from Mrs. Amanda Phipps regarding her photographs which I returned to her several weeks, possibly a couple of months ago, I am always curious to know if Mrs. Brandon has been advised of their arrival. Should you stumble across anything that looks something like a Phipps or a picture, I should appreciate your remarking upon same. Otherwise, don't worry over trying to piece words into sentences. -- Do hope you are getting a little rest after all the recent excitement....

3834

4284

Friday, July 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Again the postman was kind, and thanks to your grand letter, together with the enclosures, my day has been next best to actually having a chat with you.

And thanks for reporting the missing letter of Tuesday, the 27th. Let us hope it has arrived. And if it hasn't, let us hope it will. But whatever happens, let us hope I didn't lose my mind the way I did once and send it to Robina, - a circumstance I never have been able to figure out. Perhaps the thing merely got lost. If so, I hope it is not the one in which I returned Madam Rand's letter to you.

Congratulations are in order that you are momentarily, at least, free from nomadic South Americans. I hope the poor lady makes her journey home safely. I hope another lady may not have to have her own routine thrown into such a hurly-burly again this year, for it seems to me whether in the country or city, - but especially in the latter, such alterations tend to scramble all one's activities from pre dawn to post midnight.

And may I say thanks to you for giving me the copy of the letter, penned in 1945 from the Madam. It's a good letter, even though one can only wonder how the mind worked when bonds worth thousands were being tossed in the direction of the youngest child and the latter's offspring with the exception of the "crumb falling from the rich man's table" landed at my feet.

I certainly was never one to beat the drum for Sister, but it must be admitted that by lying to people that her Mother had left me all her Alexandria property, which she herself had long since absorbed, she at least displayed some inkling that a pretty shabby manipulations had been effected in the direction of one whom the Madam and all the children united in declaring they couldn't ever hope to re-imburse.

As for Arenbourg, the original papers on that were altered at my request, so that it would cover not one person but two, - a fact which seemed to surprise the merchant planter grantly at the time, but which he incorporated without any protest.

I can't for the life of me figure out how you found time to make the listings you did and to transcribe the data you enclosed.

4285

A couple of interruptions during the time I was running through the list of photographs necessitates running through it again, and I am glad to have it, although at this writing it would seem I shall probably not have need of any of them, what with the probability that others approximating the same material may be to hand.

I wish I had asked my secretary to give me the name of the book from which the data was taken covering the Natchitoches census, spreading over several years. I am delighted to have these items and shall undoubtedly refer to them more than once in the future.

And I am impressed by the absence of the year 1776, for that seems to be missing, or among those not present, and so I am glad to have details from that one to go along with the others.

That the exports, - or values of exports, should have been expressed in dollars, is interesting, and one always wonders on which particular dollar these valuations were based, - evidently by the translator, - since the dollar, as a medium of exchange had not come into existence at that period, save perhaps the Spanish dollar. But the figures are striking when indicating, for example, that exports totaled for one year or other some quarter of a million while expenses ran into half a million. I should have assumed it might almost have been the other way around. And it is enlightening to have through the dollar valuation the approximate comparisons of credits as represented by the export of indigo at \$100,000.00; Skins at \$85,000.00 Timber at \$50,000.00, - or however the staples for that era figured.

I think I had about as busy a morning as I can recall during the present warm weather. With three gardeners going full tilt at Melrose, I had at the same time a tractor and mowing machine going at Arenbourg, with a couple of other people behind the tractor smoothing off the edges of Johnson Grass, etc. If pieced together, my trips marching up and down the road would reach from here to the moon and back, I guess, and I needed no fur lined ear muffs to keep me warm. In the midst of things I got caught by people to whom I had to be polite, people like Mrs. Coombs who hadn't been this way in months, and others whom I should have been glad to chat with, had not the gardeners already been gardening and the tractors tractoring madly.

But I made it alright, and Arenbourg looks ever so much more tidy than during the first week in June. As for to-morrow, the 4th of July will be here in greater earnest, and it will be nice when Sunday evening comes and we can resume our little conversations.....

4286

Sunday, July 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It was so thoughtful of you to send me the air mail, providing as it does, a glimpse of current activities and re-assurance that the postal service is again functioning as it should, and that the item of the 27th has safely reached your true hand. To tell the truth, I think it wonderful this daily communication is effected with such regularity. But I think it well to note whenever a jam holds up delivery, so we may constantly check on any slip-ups.

"Don't ride a free horse to death" is an old adage I should keep constantly in mind these days, and particularly so in view of your disarming generosity in offering every assistance in the current labors. A case in point is the Guest Book, - styled on the cover as "The Open Door" which I am forwarding on Monday or Tuesday by Registered package.

Open Door I know you will enjoy turning through it before returning it to the local archives. If convenient during the ensuing 3 or 4 months, you should care to transcribe a page from time to time, - making each transcription or each entry on a separate page, such a typed transcription might be used for a brief section in the Melrose Scrapbook. I haven't gone through the entire book. I shall not include the James Cunningham or the Zola Dutoit entries. In making the transcription, should you find time, it seems to me you might want to make an extra copy for your own scrapbooks. You will feel quite free to include every entry in that transcription, including the names mentioned above, - J. C. and Z. D., - or you may omit them and any others, of course, should you feel they contribute little or nothing to the interest of the collection.

Of the loose sheets of paper, I know not their contents, but naturally assume they were intended for the book, to be pasted in. If they seem to be in such a category, their contents might be transcribed, too, and in the Chapter on them Open Door, some such covering phrase as this will be employed: - "Within the confines of 'The Open Door' one reads this entry from the pen of So-and-So."

Your opinion as to which page from the book itself should be photostated for an illustration in the Melrose Scrapbook, will be greatly appreciated. The page bearing the woolcott entry is not interesting in my opinion. If you find some other page more suitable for reproduction, I shall appreciate your advice. The plantation will have the photostat made in town after the original comes back.

4287

4287

As for local news, I haven't any.

Saturday was a beautiful day with a lovely cool breeze. The big and little Generals with their wives, plus Pat, came in the morning. They all dined at Celeste's, after which they had a little tour. It was good to see both Generals again, the little one having been here last along about 1945, if I remember correctly. His wife is tall, slim and pretty and the tour meant as much to her as it would to any of the card-cutting set. I felt just a little sorry for the senior General who tried so hard to create interest in things for his offspring and is in-law. There were a couple of parties in town last night and dinner at the big house this noon, after which everybody went home, and I headed out for a quick round at Arenbourg to look at a couple of things. On my return in 10 minutes I found a heap of stuff on my block of wood by the front door where Grandpa usually sits. It was evidently a May Basket from Madam Rand whom I never did see.

All day the weather has been hot-hot and remains so tonight at 9:45. An overcast sky suggests we may have a sprinkle or two before morning.

Saturday night I did a little reading from Walter White's "A Man Called White". I like the book. It seems to be in perfect balance in the first half, - autobiographical, after which it seems to be developing into almost another book, with stress on racial relations, and especially those in industry and military circles, covering the 1940-1948 period. I shall probably enjoy that part, too, since I haven't been able to keep up with much that has been in the press during the past decade. And I reckon the viewpoint as well as the data will be new in many instances. You will not be surprised to learn that Mrs. Roosevelt, although not frequently mentioned, invariably appears in a favorable light, perhaps even to greater advantage than F. D. R. in Mr. White's memoirs. Mr. Hoover is roasted to a turn, in violent contrast to the white-washing the Bearcats gave him in this Basic History. Mr. White refers to Mr. Hoover during his Presidency as "that man in the lily white House".

The author is or was Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, - or some such organization, which seems to be a far flung society about which I know nothing. I think I shall write them a note of inquiry, asking if they have a branch in this area. Perhaps I could set them to work, reforming the Gorham hill-billies and the Cape River mulattoes, if, indeed, prejudice lends itself to reformation, which sometimes seems doubtful.

I hope your week end has had a few moments of relaxation. I thought of you particularly today when we had just the kind of roast you mentioned in your letter, and how much nicer it would have been to have a go at the one in dust form rather than concert proportions....

4288

4288

Monday, May 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The Guest Book, mentioned in yesterday's note, went off in today's post, so I reckon it may reach your true hand about the time this note arrives.

Again I pray you not to bother with making a transcription of the several entries at the present time, if you are pressed for time and denied relaxation, what with bus ness affairs, the unasked for social demands, week end hurly-burries and so on. And in the event you should find, after two or three months, that on convenient opening arrives, don't hesitate about returning the item as is, and I can always bounce it in Robina's direction, or some such. Please, please, don't ever let my thoughtless demands on your time and good nature take precedence over your own good judgement in conserving your own precious self.

And while speaking of conserving your health, I blush to move right straight along in reference to another expenditure of the same in regard to the Madam's diary. I hope I have mentioned the matter before, but if I haven't, I shall run the risk of repeating by saying I think you should use your own judgement in omitting anything you think might get into other people's hair. As for mentioning people still living, I think that is alright, unless something unpleasant be included. I think people might like to find their names in the Diary, and another point is the fact that so few people living ever see their names in print in a Diary of this kind that including them might have a note of novelty about it that would appeal not only to the individuals mentioned but to their friends and acquaintances.

Sometimes I think the Madam's was one of the most difficult personalities to set down correctly so that those who did not know her and never had corresponded with her might get a true concept of what she was like. Her capacity for affection was such that sometimes after meeting someone for the first time, she would, on saying goodbye, feel impelled to kiss them forthwith. Such an impulse isn't often manifested by other women of her stature, so far as I have been able to observe, and even had any other hostess felt such an impulse after the first half hour conversation with an individual, courage would probably be lacking to carry out the impulse. In the

8234

4289.

Madam's case, however, no courage would be involved, for to her custom and etiquette in such matters never crossed her mind. Her impulse was to bestow an embrace, - the most natural thing in the world so far as she was concerned, and embrace she did, and that was all there was to it. Perhaps one of the most depressing episodes I have witnessed in her contacts with others has been the moment when she moved forward to kiss the guest goodbye and the latter, quite unprepared for the benediction, failed to respond, leaving the Madam in a situation not unlike that we have all probably experienced, when we have extended a hand in greeting to a new-comer, and the latter, momentarily distracted, fails to sense the proffered gesture, and our hand fumbles in the air as we try to cover by seeming to take a pass at an imaginary moth, or some such.

And then for those like Lyle or Robina or me for whom she had unlimited affection and probably instinctively felt a reciprocal sensation on our part, she was forever indulging in a gesture which may have seemed odd to new-comers but which seemed perfectly natural for us. If something appeal to her sense of humor and she wanted to share it with one of us, she would instinctively begin to giggle in her beard and taking a step closer, would incline her head so her forehead would rest on one's shoulder, thus establishing a physical contact the resulted in both of us giggling in unison. Once I remember at a select gathering at Yucca, when I was the only white person present, my guests decided to do impersonations, and while this one or that one imitated by voice and gesture, one youth started giggling and crossing the room, came over and inclined his forehead on my shoulder, whereupon everyone roared with merriment and shouted the identity of the person whom the youth was trying to re-create.

But all this talk is to indicate that it is possible the Madam's entries in her Diary, while perfectly matter of fact to those who were acquainted with her by direct contact or correspondence, might not correctly convey her personality through the written word to those who knew her not. It is with such thoughts in mind that I leave it to you to decide if you think her brevity of entry conveys the right slant or not.

But here I am at the end of the page, and the reading of what I have chattered about must be pretty dull going. Forgive the dullness and perhaps I shall do better on the morrow. I hope the hot sticky weather of last week has changed for the better in your neighborhood. Here it is cloudy and humid and excellent for the Arenbourg children.....

1234

4290

Tuesday, July 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A full up mail pouch, a full up day. I haven't even slit the envelopes on letters from C. Ramsey, M. D. Lake and so on, but I need scarcely confess that I haven't hesitated about exploring the contents of the Manila envelope, - together with all its grand enclosures, from the best pictorial haunts on the continent through your grand letter and on to the entrancingly designed manuscript, and the clipping covering my old philosopher friend. (Irene duan)

May I say thanks and blessings on you for all your nobility in thus making my day so rich.

If luck be with me, I may have further assistance to aid me in putting the faulty sentence on page 12 or rather page 10, to rights. By breaking it up into two or more sentences, it will certainly be much smoother and hence more passable when it encounters the Editor's blue pencil.

I would let the word "wearing" and the "Daughters of the American Right" stand. By the time this article gets into print, - if ever, - will strike only after the Revolutionary Daughters have decided to or not to do something about the Survey. The average reader is intended to assume I am referring to the Revolutionary girls, but while nobody will think of such a thing, they might also have been wives of the member of the National Manufacturers Association or Chambers of Commerce or some such, a thin loop hole in case the Survey should eventually be held up because the Revolutionary gals found the coat fitted them when they slipped it on.

Pilgrimage
I have the same feeling you do about additional material being desirable concerning the claims of Melrose to historic interest. I hesitated about including such data, however, hoping that the Editor to whom the manuscript was submitted, might ask for it. But it seemed wise to me not to include it in the original draft, foreseeing that the Editor's first impression might be that an attempt was being made on my part to get some free advertising for Melrose. You and I, of course, both know that I am not fishing for any more road-runners. But Melrose is no Bellegrath Gardens, Afton Villa, Hope Farm, Drayton Hall and the Editor might not sky away from details. I sincerely appreciate your cooperation in advising me of your reaction on these points and they are truly ever so helpful in giving me pause and an opportunity to add, subtract or let go. I'll append a possible paragraph covering claims to distinction which you may later as you please to fit in with whatever else has been not said in the balance of the article:....

0031

4291

I have the promise of a few moments of assistance on the morrow when Ora threatens to pass along this bend of the river. It is evident that my second secretary will not get around to see me before tomorrow's dawn, I shall accordingly make no attempt to make the proposed alterations for insertion until the morrow, and shall accordingly enclose them in the Memo of Wednesday, the 12th.

And may I thank you for all the particulars you had to pass along regarding doings in the literary field. I am wondering if the Anne Arish book isn't the one she was racing against time to turn out last summer and perhaps never achieved because of her encounter with "the big bad Wolf".

As to the enclosed copy of Wilkerson correspondence, you will note I have been sufficiently leisurely in rushing into a response and that I, in my casualness, have nicely side-stepped any entangling phrases. In the mean time I have written friend Postell, asking him frankly if Wilkerson offered him any recompense for his impending opus on ante bellum plantation medicine. I have no doubt there is scant parallel between the Postell manuscript and the Melrose one, for the Postell item will undoubtedly be primarily concerned with the printed page while the Melrose item is envisioned to carry less print and more pictures. Still, it seems to me there might be an element of balance in the completed product, for I assume a volume on ante bellum medicine might be expected to have very restricted appeal while the Scrapbook, if properly contrived, might enjoy both a wider market and a greater span of time in sales.

Eventually, when the manuscript approaches a jell, don't you think we might offer it for an opinion to some of our friends in the publishing business, --say Hastings House, -- just to see what their reaction might be.

Chapel

The other day you asked if any of the Holy Ghosts have ever honored me or my silent partner, St. Martin. The answer is But No, Definitely. In the first place, there seems to be such a constant turn-over of personnel in St. Augustin's that nobody ever remains long and the ones who are men of good will are exiled or sent forth before I ever get an opportunity to know them very well. Only Father Callahan, the former head of the Duquesne University set up remains permanently and he and I treat each other with studied politeness on the rare occasions when we encounter each other. He is probably quite right in disdaining me because he probably thinks me perfectly outrageous, while I seek to avoid boredom in his company, finding him at once too smug and too much of a bigot. Imagine the type of mind that would devote itself in the Cane River country, writing an endless symposium, subsequently published, disproving the Einstein Theory. Personally, I should prefer to start trying to prove that Christ was right.....

0031

4292

Memorandum:

In this envelope or an accompanying one, you will find two or three items in evidence of our growing store of material for the Melrose Scrapbook.

The snapshots arrived in a letter from Mary Dagget Lake, and eventually must go back to her of course. Because of their size, I am a little uncertain as to which of the two seems the better. From where I sit, it would seem that horizontal picture with the notation pasted at the bottom is the better of the two, but I shall rely completely on your own excellent judgement.

*Photos of a
Scrapbook
with*

And speaking of snapshots bestirs me to make inquiry regarding their reproduction from somebody around here who knows about such things. I am under the impression they have to be re-taken for enlargement and the making of a glossy print. But however that is, that is unimportant at the moment.

I shall also send along Mrs. Lake's letter. As you have already pointed out, the Carmolyte book may well be advantageous in preparing material for the Scrapbook. I think I shall not tell Madam Lake that the Madam removed many of her own letters and destroyed them. From your excellent account of the contents of that volume, I take it we may find some examples of her better letters, should we have occasion to include them. On second thought, perhaps I shall tell Madam Lake about the removals on the assumption she may have some material that might be pertinent.

And may I have the temerity to suggest that we might make a transcript of that section of little Miss A.'s letter, covering her reference to the Madam. If memory serves, she begins said reference on page 2 (back of the 1st page), and runs it over for two or three lines on page 3. It is precisely the thing I had hoped for and so characteristically expressed in little Miss A.'s own inimitable fashion that it ought to fit it perfectly in the Art Section, don't you think. Later, when the matter of illustrations are considered, this might be an item the publisher will want photostated, and accordingly I am entranced that the burden of the statement appears on a single side of the page.

*John
Allerton's
Letter*

All in all, as it were, I think we are unusually fortunate in having secured the snapshots and the Art statement, don't you think so.

3889

4293

I am writing a few letters to various people, asking if they would care to write me in some detail regarding their impressions of the Madam, - each request being for a statement on a limited subject. For example, a little later when the flood tide of summer has slackened, I shall drop a line to Lucy Morgan for a statement on her impressions of the Madam's interest in weaving and their mutual enthusiasms over "looming" both at Melrose and Penland. (2 "n's" or 1).

And I shall ask Caroline Dormon for a symposium on the Madam's interest in flowers and gardening generally, and of Lillian Trichell I shall request an illuminating account of the Madam's go at Native Louisiana Iris. What with Miss Dormon as the stirrer-up of "Wild Flowers of Louisiana" and Mrs. Trichell as former President of the Native Iris Society, their statements might cover particulars that would fit in neatly with that phase of the Madam's interests, don't you think so.

I momentarily have the Dormon scrapbook, brought over from the big house to Yucca, and in it I may find, -eventually, some stuff that will be quotable. We shall see.

In the Melrose Scrapbook there is a somewhat extended poem "A Rosebud in the Garden of Melrose" or some such, which, if memory serves, was composed in honor of Sister by Miss Sally or some such. I shall turn to it shortly and see if it is terrible enough to flatten out both the writer and the subject, and if so, it might be employed in the dishier section.

If the Morgan letter should chance to be on Pen or Penn land stationary and confined to a single page, it might be reproduced as an illustration, but as much could not be hoped for from the Briarwood quarter.

And, switching momentarily to the Melrose-Madam scene, did you ever chance to read that chapter in "Old Louisiana" about Christmas at Melrose. I wonder if it would be suitable for filler, if Century or whoever hold the copyright would permit, and would some chapter about the Madam at Melrose from "The Friend of Joe Gilmore" lend flavor.

In view of all the stuff written above, I shall withhold the insertions for the Pilgrimage article until tomorrow, the 13th. I have jotted them down but should like to have an opportunity to run through the article if possible. If not, I'll send the insertions along tomorrow regardless. I had rather expected Ora today but apparently she couldn't make it. Perhaps I shall find someone else within the next 24 hours.

I hope you are finding time to relax a little, but in view of your day to day routine, --plus all the above, I don't see how that is humanly possible. But there is no rush on any of this stuff so let it slide if an opportunity to do nothing momentarily turns up. It remains hot and fair here, and everything goes smoothly at this writing.....

4294

Trichell letter

Thursday, July 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your elegant epistle of Sunday to hand in this morning's post.

I appreciate the enclosures, --all of them, --beginning with the card carrying the quotation from Proverbs and continuing on through the transcriptions from the Madam's Diary and so on.

I haven't had an opportunity to run through the latter, but shall do so shortly, and more shall I speak of that subject at a subsequent sitting.

I can only marvel at your memory and thank you for your mention of the several sketches about Cane River, Matchez, etc., which I had but completely forgotten. I have no copy of any of these and have all but forgotten their contents. I am wondering if we may not be able to make use of the article on the Cane River country, either as a chapter in the Melrose Diary or in some current magazine publication, assuming the Pilgrimage article might be accepted. At least, I am wondering if it might not be used as the basis for something or other in one or the other of such lines of endeavor, --the scrapbook or an article for magazine publication by itself. Curious that Caroline Ramsey never did acknowledge receipt of this item which I sent her years ago with a view to using it in connection with some of her pictures. Perhaps we could stir up some pictures subsequently available for such a purpose, were it to be used for a magazine article.

Hold these items temporarily, if you please, and I shall contemplate the possibilities, as I trust you will, and we shall eventually see what we shall see.

I have envisioned a section of the Melrose Diary under the title of "Cane River Color Line" or some such, for the mulatto business must be touched upon, and will probably end up by being the major section of the chapter having to do with Grandpere and his descendants. It still isn't clear in my mind how all this stuff is going to be handled and still retain my original thought and present earnest desire to keep the proposed item in the form of a scrapbook, but we shall work that out eventually, --one way or another.

In today's post came the enclosed letter from Mrs. Trichell which is just as much of a panic as she is but at the same time

DESA

4235

holds material of value and originality of expression that may well lend itself to just the type of stuff we are hoping to include in our current opus. In view of the rather heavy post and the fact that I didn't want Dr. Knipmeyer to read most of it, I turned this item over to him for reading, and when we got to one section, I asked him to underline one sentence in particular, - a thought which seems extremely favorable to the Madam and generally illuminating for demonstrating one phase of her attitude toward people. I think you will agree with me that this underlined sentence is of value, and it is possible, had I an opportunity to re-read the whole thing, I might discover other sentences or paragraphs that might well lend themselves to quotation.

I have reponded to Miss Lillian's letter, asking her if she would care to make a contribution to the book in the form of a statement as to the Madam's interest in flowers, with a particular emphasis on Native Iris. Erratic as Miss Lillian is, she may come forth with something grand, --or something of no value at all. But we shall sample and see.....don't you think so.

I am impelled to write to Caroline Dormon tonight, too, asking her for a broadside on the Madam's propensities for planting. I never could agree with either the Madam or Caroline on matters about gardening, for neither of them were gardeners, but rather were raisers of plants, which, you will agree, is a horse of quite a different hue. After all, Briarwood today is more of a Briarpatch than anything else, and Melrose gardens, had the Madam not been restrained by Lyle and me, would have been more of a refined and crowded jungle of rare plants than anything vaguely suggesting a garden. How well do I recall the time, for example, when 100,000 Guernsey lily bulbs were ploughed up from their well ordered borders with a view to planting Irish potatoes when the Melrose vegetable gardens already covered more acres and embraced more vegetables than the half dozen vegetable gardeners could keep up with. But Caroline's reputation both as a palnter of private grounds and the State highways will lend lustre to the plant section and because her harum-scrarum methods more or less approximated the Madam's, may lend an authenticity to the subject, to hand that would be more impressive than anything contributed by anyone else on the subject.

And thanks for transcribing the paragraph from Ora's letter. We are bound to include it as highly illuminating, too, if she doesn't mind, and I feel sure she will not. In any event, I shall ask her permission to include it right away. It will probably go along nicely with the page from little Miss Alberta, sent to you yesterday.

I have a couple of other ideas but shall spare you their consideration until the morrow. You are so noble and so generous, I know not how to say how much admiration and appreciation wells up within me.....

1/ YESA

Mr. R. B. Williams

Dr. Postell 4236

Bastille Day, 1950.

Memorandum:

You may believe it or not, but to paraphrase the National Anthem, "Le jour de gloire est arrive", and for once at least, I am going to hit off a Memo without so much as even glancing in the direction of a scrapbook, let alone spelling out the word.

A pin point drizzle began at first dawn, continuing pretty much all day. A little less moisture and the plantation could have worked for the plantation,; a little more and the plantation could have worked for us.

Freed for the day from cotton culture, Peter and Log rigged up their tractors, caking over the gear from cultivators to ploughs, with a view to having a go for us at Arenbourg. But the 6 foot length hay cut a week or so ago hadn't decomposed much and would have tangled up the ploughs a little, had we not discovered that the ground itself was too hard and dry for the ploughs themselves to make any impression. We accordingly returned the horseless vehicles to their stalls and busied ourselves mightily with rakes piling up the scattered hay in a couple of low places, and holding the thought the heaviness of the dew might increase sufficiently to soften up the ground a little. But the elements were too restrained and we got precisely no where with the mechanical equipment. I fold up my beard tonight, holding the thought a good shower between now and dawn may make it possible for us to turn the terrace upside down on the morrow.

And before quitting Arenbourg, may I be permitted the nerve to intimate that our humming bird feeding bottle in that department was cracked at the base when a bit of flying timber struck it. Should these items not be expensive and should you be in the neighborhood where they are obtainable, I wonder if we might replace the present one. And if they are not too expensive, -- I'm about to ride a free horse to death again, --I am wondering if it wouldn't be a pleasant gesture to send one to the Sterns of New Orleans and one to the Baldwins of Waco. But I pray you not to risk such expenditures, should the price be prohibitive and if their source is far removed from your usual pathways.

I am glad to be able to report that the bottle on the front gallery at Ucca continues to do a land office business, and what with the butterfly lilies currently in flower, the number of customers standing in line for the feeding bottle along about first dark is remarkable and entrancing.

4297

Up to the present writing, I never have gotten around to explore the contents of the Ramsey letter which came a couple of days ago by air mail. But I did explore the contents of a few others, including one from Rudolph. He mentioned expecting to view a movie later the same day, - "The Titan", I believe he said it was called, and, from his brief account of its advance notices, the thing is a cinematic biography of Michel Ange. I shall ask him to tell me more about the business, or perhaps you are acquainted with the item of which I have never heard a peep, if memory serves.

I had hoped that Hollywood, following the one they did of Gauguin, --wasn't it Gauguin--a while back, might follow up the one with a whole flock of others. Surely the Renaissance should provide a vast assortment of subjects for somebody with a big brush like Cecile D. de Mille, and the best part of it for him would be that once he had reconstructed a Renaissance and stirred up a billion costumes, he could use them over and over again for no end of biographies swirling around da Vinci, Cellini and all the rest.

Naturally you and I would like to see Mme. Vigee-Lebrun painting Marie Antoinette at Versailles and all the princelings from Italy through Austria and Germany and Poland to St. Petersburg and back to Paris to do the Bonapartes and thence to Georgian England and back again for a go at things under the Restoration and Louis Phillipe.

I started to hazard a guess that Audubon from Martinique to Montana and the the Labrador islets to Dakota, with Louisiana thrown in for good measure, but there is no need letting a whimsey run away with me.

I regret to report my Reading Machine is out of whack, - tubes played out, I think, and just as "Prophet in the Wilderness" came to hand. Naturally I shall be looking forward to getting the thing rigged up as soon as possible. And speaking of that reminds me of your inquiry regarding Nina's reference to a record. Over the Shreveport Columbia station I recently heard a 15 minute rendition of Tchaikovsky's Fantasia Overture to Romeo and Juliette, which I like. The announcer said it was obtainable for gramophones adjustable to 33 revolutions per minute. I believe that is the speed of the Reading Machine. I dropped a card to the station asking for particulars but never got a response. The broadcast had said these Columbia records for 33 revolutions were obtainable at some Shreveport shop but I didn't catch the name, and so I asked Nina if she could give me the name of the same, but, as you notice, she didn't. I thought I might sample one record to see if it would work, as Ed Rand tells me he thinks it would. I may be able to get him to borrow one for me from an Alexandria station. I should like to say "Scrapbook" to defy my resolution, but I shall restrain myself....

4298

4298

Calvey Ramsey

Sunday, July 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Fundamentally a quiet week end but fraught with remote thunderings bringing mere drizzles of rain; plantation blood letting with which I concerned myself only by physician and hospital arrangements by telephone; and reports from Shreveport of a domestic scuffle that only hinted at Sister quitting that city with her children to take up her residence at Melrose.

To touch upon the latter first, I wasn't greatly disturbed when some society belle telephoned J. H. from Shreveport. J. H. was in Greenville, Miss. Then Dan was called and then Paynie, all on behalf of Sister who claimed her husband had refused to come home during the past three days and that she was planning to leave him for a good. I recalled a like case when, on plea of exhaustion and desire for a rest, Sister persuaded her husband to go to New Orleans for a week end, that she might relax completely, what with no physician in the house and hence no patients in the office to disturb her. The husband, to satisfy the wife's whim, undertook the Crescent City week end requested, and therefore was slightly taken aback on learning that as soon as he had departed, she had rushed to the telephone to advise her family that her husband had suddenly and with no apparent reason deserted her. But that trick didn't work when the Madam put her foot down and said "Nothing Doing" to her daughter's expressed determination to take up her residence here. I assume this is probably a similar case and will come to nothing, I hope.

I dined with J. H. and Celeste, after which all the Henrys departed for I know not where. Half an hour later, a youth named Buck Brown was slashed to the bone across his thigh to the bone. His frantic kin folk appealed to me, a plantation order, countersigned by a physician was wanting to get him into a hospital for a major sewing job. The Cloutierville doctor, I learned by telephone, was away for two weeks. The colored doctor, - Johnson, in town, could not be reached. The lady doctor was dining at Agolia and I didn't want to disturb her. In the end, however, I had to distract her siesta, and by dint of much telephoning and searching for transportation, the exsanguinating patient got headed up the road and the hospital doors so rigged up as to fly open at his approach.

As someone quite seriously observed to J. H., - an urban dweller from some place or other: -- "It must be wonderful living here in the country where nothing ever happens and all you have to do is to sit on the gallery with a mint julep in your hand and let the cotton grow."

2051

4299

Like a bountiful dinner, half ruined by the tardiness of its serving, so comes to hand little Miss Ramsey's air mail from Biloxi, --the first peep I have heard from her since early May. Like Edith Wyatt Moore, she seems to think that when she finally does get around to take pen in hand, she can make up for vast silences by writing a book at a sitting. But to my way of thinking, they are both equally in error. After all a cistern full of water at a gulp is of dubious worth to a man too long denied a drop. But it must be admitted her paving stones are of good intentions and she is certainly generous in her offer of her pictures for scrapbook use. I responded appreciatively to all this, and yet, somehow in the back of my mind, I couldn't help wondering of what earthly use the films would be if they should eventually devolve upon me six months after the book they are supposed to illustrate may have gone to press.

*Lemuel
Justine*
And so with such trivia out of the way, may I turn to something more pleasant and noble, and by that I mean your grand letter in Saturday's post, together with the transcript you so heroically contrived from Miss Nellie's manuscript. Frankly, I don't see how you did it, and I only regret I had not admonished you more particularly to let the thing slide, only trying to discover if there was any reference to things Matchez, and Madam Phipps and her old photographs in particular. But I am nevertheless enchanted at some of the things you "unlocked" from the mysteries of her nomenclature. I am particularly glad you were able to decipher the part about Dr. Lemuel Gustine. A bachelor, he sold his Wilderness Plantation on the Pine Ridge Road to Miss Nellie's father in 1846. He and his three brothers were the outstanding physicians of Matchez in ante bellum times, and his sister, Rebecca, married William Minor, son of old Don Estaban (Stephen) Minor of Concord. Dr. Lemuel provided for his mulatto offspring and left a large estate, much of which went to his sister, including, I believe his several Louisiana plantations, and his personal effects. You have admired what is said to be his likeness and that of his son in the portrait by Lion.

At long last and by a pretty lame horse, I ran through the Pilgrimage thing. In spite of all the halts and fits and starts, it didn't sound so bad. It is possible I used one or two words repetitiously, -- perhaps the word "quite" in the same sentence somewhere in the last half of the thing. And it is possible that the insert I sent for page one may have enunciated something about old houses appearing a little further along. But you will undoubtedly catch that and change it in any way you think best. And if the Editor likes it well enough to print regardless, he may alter it a little on his own hook.

And so a week ends and a new one begins. If only you haven't let all my advances completely ruin what otherwise might have been a restful week end, there will be a load lifted from my sense of guilt for having thus put you through....

1064

4300

"don't want to see you" to waiting for you, still I
to see you, still I
Monday, July 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so, what is probably already an accomplished fact, might be a good idea. To wit:-

How would it be for the both of us to build up not one but two manuscripts, page by page, as our mutual efforts proceed.

I am keeping material in a scrapbook for my convenience, --an unused one, tucking the data and pictures coming to hand in their approximate sections, --the colonial and ante bellum in the front, the contemporary scene toward the end. As divisions begin to appear, these can find their independent brackets and when illustrations come to hand, I shall try to have them developed in duplicate, so we both may keep abreast with the general appearance of the growth.

All such considerations came to mind today when your grand letter with the exhaustive reports of the census you so thoughtfully transcribed for me on pink papers. Assuming you may have a duplicate, this will perhaps go in the front of the scrapbook, and when opportunity presents itself for me to concentrate on that section and particularly on the census, I shall send along the assimilating sections.

rid
And thanks so much for running through the several items you did. I think we ought to include Aunt Benjamin's letter, -- or whoever the lady was, -- her admonitions to her son, --and this on the grounds that it was one of the Madam's favorite letters. And in the same group, --I hope to find several from different sources, is a letter from Lyle which was just the type of letter she enjoyed most. I am enclosing it in the accompanying envelope.

From Dr. Wilkerson's letter attached herewith, I get the impression he has in mind that I am planning to do a stereotyped book. My job will be to convince him that I am trying to turn out a scrapbook. It is possible that the printing of such a volume would be prohibitive, but I don't know. At least I am hoping the letters and documents and pictures may do most of the talking, and that these, added to the various expressions penned by her friends in various fields, may prove sufficient in printed material, save for a couple of rounds I may do about Cane River Color Line and a few other pertinent details. But my hope is that the book may turn out to be not wordy but with lots of open spaces, and the best pages of the entire volume should be some blank ones entitled "My Own Impressions of Melrose" or whatever, by the pilgrim who passes this way who may want to make his own entries.

0061

4301

I like your suggestion of "Leaves From the Melrose Guest Book". That may be a place where Dr. Wilkerson will think a flock of biographical foot notes should be appended. The undoubtedly would help in one way, and yet in another, it might be as pleasant to leave it to the casual turner of the page to recollect or inquire as to identities. After all, the whole concept of this volume is to get away from the endless fortified clap-trap that usually goes into volumes brought out under University seals. After all, this is no attempt to get each buckle and ruffle exact and set down as did the Renaissance portraitist, but rather an attempt to give an impression of a person and a place after the Impressionist school. Don't you think so.....But to tell you the truth, just how the thing is going to pan out and what sort of difficulties I am going to encounter selling the idea to such a conventional Press as U. S. U. is the horse of another hue, to be mounted and managed when the appropriate time arrives.

And would you think, if used, Lyle's letter should be cluttered up with footnotes. The Scotts lived at The Shades, one of Lyle's but not one of my favorite Louisiana houses. Miss Eva is still alive, but she never reads a book and so will never see this one. Ada Jack Carver Snell is very much alive and the last I heard, so is little Miss Dorman, but I think their names would not have to be omitted. Perhaps in offering this letter as of the type the Madam liked best, --stating adequate reasons, - affection, reference to his old house, plans for impending holiday season, etc., --perhaps the whole piece could be clarified in a paragraph or two, obviating the need for footnotes. If you will run through Lyle's letter, maintaining as far as possible the attitude of the casual reader unacquainted with any of the people mentioned, your reaction would be invaluable in helping us determine how much it should be tampered with and its references amplified.

In the envelope with Lyle's letter is a page from my own Journal which I send along simply for your own entertainment,-- if any. It catalogues the hours of a Sunday spent at Melrose and seems to take a few slaps at the local religious set up that could not get published in a Scrapbook of the type we are considering. But I send it along regardless. Naturally I had forgotten ever having penned most of it, but after running through it, the events came back to me readily enough. Penned on a Sunday in 1941, I am struck by the fact two or three of the characters mentioned are still neighbors, and I am so glad you chanced to see two or three of them, making them a little more familiar.

After all your labors on your "free" evening, how nice it is to know you had the prospect of dining out and under circumstances that I hope were ever so favorable. The local panorama, the night and the aquatic atmosphere, I sincerely hope, were all on the favorable side and that you got a little of the relaxation your industry of the night before so richly entitled you to.....

0061

4302

Tuesday, July 18th, 1950.

It's a heavenly night and because of it, I lingered longer at Arenbourg than I realized. The crescent moon dispels the dark but isn't too brilliant to dim the major constellations which I have been contemplating in the South West at Arenbourg and, after my return to Yucca, away in the North beyond the glow-worm flecked bamboo.

A couple of my friends must have seen me passing the honkey tonk on my way home, for the bamboo parted just behind me and I had no difficulty at all in getting rid of an icy watermelon J. H. had sent me earlier, and a cherry pie Blythe Rand brought me this afternoon.

The day was cloudless but with a heavy dew in the morning that soaked me once at Arenbourg and once at Melrose. But after a busy day up until 2, I relaxed when Mrs. Coombs and Blythe arrived about five minutes apart, Mrs. Coombs to report that the crystal -- whatever that is, - in my Reading Machine had cracked and would require a new one that would not be available for several days. Both ladies were neighbors in Alexandria 25 years ago but today's meeting was the first time they had chanced to see each other since then. I was glad they were able to chat together for a few minutes while I hunted up some of Blythe's friends, lost somewhere in the garden. Mrs. Coombs had to go on her busy way and I knocked off long enough to ride over to the camp for a fruit punch and a slab of cake and plenty of chatter. Blythe asked especially for news of you and again remarked how pretty you are.

Celeste came over this morning to see both the 8 foot Dream lily, - usually styled the Phillipine lily, and to observe a horticultural phenomenon that developed on my front gallery yesterday. I was glad Madam Rand and her guests could see the oddity, too, for it is both unbelievable and altogether lovely.

You will recall the generous proportions of the elephant ears growing hard by the butterfly lilies. One especially large elephant ear, perhaps 5 feet long and 3 and a half feet wide spread its vast green shade horizontally above a sturdy butterfly lily some 6 or 7 feet above ground. A day or two ago the irresistible force of the climbing lily encountered the ponderous immovable body of the great

306A

4303

elephant ear. I shall never hear that expression of immovableness and impossibility of resistance that I shall not think of this particular circumstance. It would seem the most natural thing in the world that either the elephant ear would alter its horizontal position sufficiently to let the lily slide along its surface, or that the lily might alter its vertical course sufficiently to fallow along in a horizontal parallel with the elephant ear. But that is precisely what did not transpire, and what with neither giving an inch, the white points of perhaps 8 or 10 lily buds pierced slap through the thick surface of the elephant ear. Today the whole cluster burst into flower, - a whole bevy of beautifully white butterflies seemingly resting closely together, but quite separate from each other, in the very center of this vast expanse of solid green. It is really quite the loveliest thing you ever saw, but withal so seemingly contrived by human ingenuity that it really suggests a flock of ivory butterflies pinned to a vast expanse of lush smooth green velvet. Because of the breadth and length of the elephant ear, one doesn't see the butterfly lily plant at all and the stem of the elephant ear, too, is hidden by the screen of its own leaf. The respective stems of both plants are sufficiently close together and the flowers to firmly affixed to the leaf through which they have perforated that when a gentle breeze sets the great leaf stirring, the lovely white cluster in its center sways in perfect unison, unmoved by the movement of the base on which they appear to rest. And of course this motion of the great leave tends to further the illusion that the butterflies are in reality merely resting on its surface and unaffected by the swaying of the great surface on which it rests.

I owe you an apology for having rattled along at such a great length about this unimportant matter, but I have had difficulty in restraining myself because of my enthusiasm for the beautiful effect accomplished by this mere chance in horticultural collision.

Dr. Knipmayer nearly fell out at the height of the Philippine lily last Thursday and it has grown almost a foot since then. He will be entrance, however, when he gets through looking at it and puzzles over the butterflies clustered slap in the center of the elephant ear.

My first secretary grows more dilatory and my second secretary is on the verge of striking out to join the Army. And so I am casting about for someone to fill in the gap. There is a youth living 3 miles away in the Little River area who comes out this way almost daily on his horse and, marvelous to relate, he can read. So perhaps I shall be able to entice him into my business. And, in closing, I was about to congratulate myself about not having used the word, but you will notice I mentioned it in the response to Dr. Wilkerson, herewith attached.....

306A

4304

Wednesday, July 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice of you to send me such a gay note, announcing that the Open Door arrived safely. I hope you didn't set right down to transcribing it but are letting it ride along for a while, for there is no rush at all about it.

What with the plantation having become so mechanized, there is no ordinary hay rake left in the country for miles. Nowadays the processes from the cutting to the bouncing bales from the machine have left those of us needing a mere rake quite out in the cold, as it were. And so I solved our Arenbourg problem of eliminating the Johnson grass, gumming up the ploughs, by going back again today with a flock of youngsters, just at that age where energy is oozing from every pore, - curious how I have forgotten the spelling of that word, and for them the gathering of the winrows and pitching great armfuls down the bank was sheer frolic, while it was serving a definite need on our side to clear the ground for the ploughs.

I returned to Uca all a-drip but those who had done all the work seemed and looked as cool as something just off an ice cake. I cannot help wondering how they do it.

Tomorrow we shall go back again, for I was busy this afternoon, and in view of the blazing sun, I thought it just as well to grab at an asperin until another day rolled round.

Good news traveling fast, as it does, I should not have been surprised when this afternoon Blythe Rand's cousin or some such passed this way, fortified with a camera and intent on examining and recording on film the phenomenon of the elephant and the butterfly. The intensity of the shade cast by the banana leaves along the front gallery, as you know, is not designed for good lighting in the business of making snap shots, but I am hoping that some suggestion of the horticultural miracle may be revealed, even though it be no more than an intensely vast field of shadow and the explosion of snowy blossoms centering in its midst, for even that little bit will be sufficient to suggest to you how remarkable the whole thing appears.

My old friend, King Solomon, whose likeness you may recall in the photograph with me wherein each of us thought the other was holding the flowers of the elephant ear, but neither did, well, Little King has joined the Army. He confided his intentions to me last week end but he didn't want the white folks to know about his enlistment until it was effective. I knew him since he was ten, and now that he has become a soldier, my beard seems longer and longer.

The supper table tonight was graced by J. H., Eugene and I or me. Eugene allowed us how little King had just telephoned regarding his enlistment and observed that such a job wasn't bad, - \$75.00 permonth, with clothes, food and shelter. J. H. concurred. So did I. Hummmmmmmmm.....

I am wondering when my second secretary will be taking to a uniform. It was his intention to join with Little King, but his father's signature was required and the latter was whisked off to jail with four other negroes on the place for stealing cattle, and that threw Murrell's plans out of joint. My guess is that the cattle thieves will all be out of jail within a day or two, and my pursuit of a new assistant will begin. If pursuit there must be, I hope the need for it will come before cotton opens, for by then money will be easy and trying to compete with cotton and pecans on Melrose will be up hill going.

The enclosure from Dora suggests the rumor of his death, as passed along in Colorado to little Miss Denholme, was great exaggeration. A verbal second hand message today from the wood carving school boy whose home is somewhere in the Little - Red Rivers area. He and the son of Beau Mack, my barber, are, at the mature age of 13 or 14, being paid three dollars a day cutting grass on Shreveport lawns until late August, when they will return home to pick cotton. The youth sent word he was spending his evenings carving things out of wood which he would bring with him on his return and we shall arrange an exhibit in the African House to which I shall invite faculty members of the colored Trade School and later the Art Department from the college. As Huey Long's sister is the head of the latter, I suppose she will be out in front when that delegation arrives. I shall arrange to have Harry Smith, the Alexandria photographer who did many of the shots in the Picayune article about the Madam present, for there are two or three items which must be photographed for the Plantation Scrapbook, --the Simon degree stencil and so on, and he might as well make it on the same day so an educational "droop" may be recorded at the same time.

Well, so things turn, and I am hoping against hope that you a en't driving yourself unmercifully at "The Open Door" and such like. Please be considerate of you.....

Thursday, July 20th, 1950.

Memorandum

Surely I need not tell you it is good to have your gift in today's post. It must seem something in the nature of a gift -- and a relief, -- to your own good self to be able to read these lines, struck off on the new ribbon. And when I have finished on this machine tonight, how much more delicious is going to be my cigarette on the gallery, just because of your generosity.

How good you are.....and how nice.....

The faintness of my old ribbon impressed itself on me the other day when I mailed the original letter to Dr. Wilkerson, - something akin to ghost scribbling, and the former nomenclature on the duplicate, thanks to a fairly new carbon. And I was pleased with the whole business, thinking, as I did, that it would do the University Press Director no harm to struggle through my communication, while I hoped that the duplicate you received would be strong enough to glance through without efforts.

At Arendburg today we finally get the terrace pretty well burshed off, so far as the stalwart masses of Johnson grass-hay was concerned. But we had labor repercussions as a result, - or complaints from associates of the laborers. When July is hot and the discontented are impatient for cotton to get to opening and it doesn't all sorts of things "burst out", and today is was some of the youngster who wanted to start something by telling their fellow laborers, after they had been paid off, that they received two or three times as much for their efforts as did their hearers. For the children, it was a game and if their companions could get one to come to ask me about it, they were in the 7th Heaven of glee, having a great time in heaping and hollering when their companions returned. But while it affords no end of merriment for the children, their parents, often having less sense, get terribly distressed about the cheating of their offspring, and so July boils and the parents stew and the only thing of which anyone is certain is that September will eventually roll 'round and then old and young alike will be up thru to their hips in cotton and, so long as cotton picking lasts, the world will be bright and gay, and the honkey tonk meisey as of almost any old Saturday night.

4305

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Well, so things turn, and I am hoping against hope that you a en't driving yourself unmercifully at "The Open Door" and such like. Please be considerate of you.....

4306

Thursday, July 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Surely I need not tell you it is good to have your gift in today's post. It must seem something in the nature of a gift -- and a relief, -- to your own good self to be able to read these lines, struck off on the new ribbon.

And when I have finished on this machine tonight, how much more delicious is going to be my cigarette on the gallery, just because of your generosity.

How good you are.....and how nice.....

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4307

Too many times have we all started to look for something and have the quest degenerate into a top to bottom go at house cleaning. I plead guilty to such silliness this afternoon when I started to look for a Kinsey sketch and concluded the business by putting a million things in order and finding one or two things I had not be searching for, and as much adrip from shaded heat as I would have been had I remained in the sun.

One thing I did find, and which I think we may use to advantage in the Plantation Scrapbook is a fine full length photograph, - or enlarged snapshot of Madame Aubin-Regue. It is a study in white and near white, for her hair is the color of snow as is her dress, with a checked apron to set off the whiteness and intensify it. It may lend itself especially well in the section, -- Cane River Celer Line, or whatever we call it. I had thought we might have to use the painting of Grandpere for this purpose, but I had preferred to reserve it for the Melrose portraits. Discovering this likeness of Madame Aubin-Regue provides just the proper illustration for it clearly illustrates absence of negroid characteristics in this great granddaughter of Grandpere, and the great, great granddaughter of Marie Therese Coin-Coin Metoyer.

The Weather Bureau promises a low of 76 tonight which persuades me I am likely to seek shelter in shade tomorrow afternoon when I shall continue further explorations. I shall try to hold to the thought that I am supposed to be looking for something other than disorder, and when stumbling over the latter, not so much as give it a second glance.

From the enclosure, arriving from Rudolph today, I am impelled to cast about for further impressions covering the "adam's interest in weaving. At Penland, the season must be at its peak, and yet I think I shall write little Miss Lucy, asking if she would care to write something or other. She can be turning the matter over in her mind between jumps and then when autumn arrives and the North Carolina swirl begins petering out, she will have had an opportunity to formulate in her mind what she then may want to set down on paper. don't you think so. Or would it be wiser -- and more considerate of her -- for me to wait until October.

J. H. tells me some Department heads from the Agriculture Department are coming for a few days next month. I believe some relatives are scheduled a couple of weeks hence to remain for a few days, so that what with others scheduled to pass by for the day, it looks like we shall not be lonesome.....

Cane River
Celer Line

4308

P. S.

Thanks, too, for speaking of L. J.'s reaction to the Pilgrimage thing. Her reaction is valuable for it shows I must have bent too far backward in attempt to avoid doing a travelogue about Melrose, whittling the thing down to the vanishing point, as I strove to keep the Pilgrim Problem rather than the Melrose scene in the fore ground. Daily I expect Ora to pass this way, and if she does, I'll have her scribble in a few lines at the point suggested in your letter. But Ora failing, -- or the material already sent having sufficed, you can let the thing slide along any old time, although there is certainly not rush, for I am sure it wouldn't be published before January or February and three months interval between submitting and printing should be ample.

0184

4309

Issac Mae Culter

Marjery Hunter

Marie Stanley

Madison Crunewald

Friday, July 21st, 1950.

Memorandum: I have not had time to write you a letter since I have been so busy. I have been so busy that I have not had time to write you a letter since I have been so busy. I have been so busy that I have not had time to write you a letter since I have been so busy.

I can't my new ribbon nice. I have been so busy that I have not had time to write you a letter since I have been so busy. I have been so busy that I have not had time to write you a letter since I have been so busy.

Well, anyhow, I have jotted down a few of the names of which you made inquiry.

My intention was to write you immediately after reading your letter. Two succeeding flocks of pilgrims interposed, however, and so I shall have to touch on some of the questions you asked at subsequent sittings.

Before leaving The Open Door, however, I will raise the question if you do not agree with me that it might be a good idea to keep this transcribed material unfolded temporarily, you retaining the transcription until we have decided how best to incorporate it in the scrapbook. Perhaps an introductory paragraph or page may be in order. Perhaps one Editor or another will feel it advisable to identify some of the people or list the better known books of the authors whose names appear. Marie Stanley, deceased, for example wrote what the Madam thought an excellent book, "Gulf Stream" or some such title, and, if memory serves, it had something to do with the mulatto, appearing, I believe, just before or just after "Children of Strangers".

The palmist you inquired about was Ethel Mumford Grand or Grant Mumford, and had still another name, too, I believe, having been married thrice. She had spent three fortunes in personal charities, knew everybody in the world and her son, whose name eludes me momentarily still lives in New York, on Grove Street, I believe.

Lyle never tired of repeating and before the Madam and Sister saw the latter became when Ethel, in reading Sister's palm, stated flatly that Sister was the written image, not of her mother, as Sister wanted to be told, but of her father.

But let me hasten on to thank you for your kindness in offering to have photographs and photostats made locally. In one or two instances, this may be of the greatest assistance. I have already had an understanding with J. M. that the plantation will defray such costs and so if you will kindly let me know from time to time, I shall reimburse you, and it seems to me better to have these payments made every three or four weeks rather than letting them accumulate. I leave it to your own good

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4310

judgement as to size. If there isn't much difference in the prints, however, as to costs, I mean, I should think the larger might have a more striking appeal to the publisher.

I have not had time to run through the other items you so kindly sent along but I do want to thank you for them and I shall speak of them also at a later sitting. It was kind of you to make a transcript of Lyle's letter from Baton Rouge to me. I had forgotten it. I think we may want to use it sometime or other. May I return the original to you, or would it be simpler for you if I retained it here. And at this point let me hasten to add that should all the impediments or an portion of it that I forward from time to time create a space problem, and you care to have me store any or all of it in an armchair here at Yucca for you, I shall be delighted to do so. As regards anything that has been disposed of for any reason, don't regret such dispositions having been made, for none of these in themselves were of vast value and the torrents of additional stuff will fill up all missing spaces readily enough. If the last Lyle letter doesn't come to the surface, don't bemoan its loss either, for it wasn't important and the same impression that it created can be found in a dozen other and possibly even better items from his own pen.

We dined earlier than usual tonight, J. H. explaining to me that he was leaving immediately for Shreveport to listen to the point whatever to antiphonal hymns by Herr Dr. and Frau Wenk. He says Dr. Wenk has taken an apartment, leaving Sister to occupy the house. Let us hope this widest break yet is patched up again.

It is difficult to envision what life would be like in these parts, were Sister to pack up her plunder and head out in this direction. And the other thing, -- a telephone from Misanthropism at noon today. She says a Chicago publication, -- it sounded like The Negro Digest, has written to say they will publish The Black Swan article in October or November.

Mrs. Heleman is heading out next week for Paduka, -- of all places and possible ways of spelling, -- Paduka, Kentucky, to visit a sister for a week. After that, she threatens to honor me with a visit, against which I shall have an opportunity to brace myself, -- and Friend Restell, who should be in the neighborhood by then. In the mean time, as I continue my search and research for the Plantation Scrapbook, I may run across some material suitable for The Negro Digest or whatever the thing is called, and when I learn if anything is paid for the stuff and if so, how much, there may be an opportunity to do some business in that direction. And so things turn, and blessings on you for all the myriad things you are doing so whole heartedly.....

4311

4311

Sunday, July 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

One thing I must admit, -- I didn't miss my Reading Machine this week end.

A few pilgrims, a few acquaintances unwittingly contrived to stagger their arrivals and departures in such a way as to dove tail perfectly from 9:30 this morning until after 6:00 tonight. The weather is hot and humid and as July invariably marks the season when enervation is at its maximum and nerve tension at its highest pitch, I find myself about as crisp and energetic as an old soaping dish rag.

Perhaps it is the hot weather impelling everything in long pants to join or try to join the Army, and the fact that my second secretary leaves in the morning undoubtedly adds a measure of tiredness to my momentary outlook for I never cared much for fishing in the first place, and fishing for secretaries has no appeal at all for me.

Perhaps it is the present heat wave that gave such an unexpected twist to domestic relations in Shreveport. I have learned one or two more details regarding matters in that area, and while any thought of patching up the business would seem out of the question in normal households under like circumstances, the fact that everything about the particular one is so unpredictable that even the impossible, -- I hope, may be effected.

I believe the first inkling the wife had that anything was out of joint was when she blandly ordered something from a store where she had an account, only to be told delivery could not be made as her husband had stopped her credit. Then she discovered the telephone had been disconnected and the house phone number diverted to an apartment, just taken out in her husband's name. She then consulted the family strong box where they kept about three thousand dollars in cash, only to find the box brimming over with toilet tissue.

At the moment it would appear she is free to keep the residence and the children and he to supply her with one hundred seventy five dollars every two weeks on which she cannot possibly live, of course.

According to present plans, she and the children and Nina

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McInnes are scheduled to spend several days here in this coming week, arriving about Wednesday or Thursday, I believe. That undoubtedly will be a three ring circus, but something one can stand alright if assured the circus will eventually terminate and all the clowns and wild animals return to Winter quarters shortly thereafter.

The bright spot in the picture is that the husband says it is impossible to live with such a woman while the woman says her husband, borrowing a phrase from the President, is a son of a bitch. The family, having always thrived on quarrels and recriminations, it would seem the pattern remains unbroken, and so long as the form remains intact, I assume the momentary separated parties may come together and again the mad duet of life return to its original theme and pitch.

I bore you with all these details so you may have a comprehensive picture of the present set up and thus be able to comprehend the better whatever may fly off at a tangent within the immediate future. In the mean time, I am holding the thought that it may rain constantly during the impending visit, which will add to the boredom of the visitors, for under the pleasantest atmospheric conditions, the country falls on the lady. I think, and if it can be at its drabdest while she is here, that factor ought to weigh heavily in the direction of making the glitter of society life in town seem ever so much more attractive.

Dr. Rand who came with his niece and several young people, seemed better, I thought, than at any time I had seen him since last Winter. His appearance was a brace on a busy afternoon. The McInnes arrived just as the Rands were leaving and remained much too long. Mr. Brew's uncle was another visitor. He left

Melrose five or six years ago to take a job in the garage of the Police Department of the city of Houston, Texas. He says he has done alright financially and bought himself a home there, but is restive for the time to come when his pension will start and he can return to Cane River. He finds Houston exhilarating but cold from both atmospheric and human viewpoints.

On Saturday I uncovered quite a bit of material having to do with Cane River persons it is that, when further explored and sorted, will undoubtedly provide much additional data for the Scrapbook. One unexpected document is a sworn statement made by Grandpere's grandchildren, something having to do with military service along about 1864, wherein it states that their grandmother, Agnes, Grandpere's wife, although born a slave, had been emancipated prior to her marriage. She is the lady whose portrait hangs to the left of the door in the living room where Grandpere hangs on the right. This is the first time I ever heard that grandma had once been in the same position as her mother-in-law, Marie Therese Coin-Coin.....

118A

4313

Monday, July 24th, 1950.

Memorandum: The enclosure from Ora is nice. I am glad she doesn't mind us using the quotation from her letter regarding the Madam.

I was a little jolted by her demur in writing something about the Madam's scrapbooks. Frankly I thought I had asked her to write something about the Madam's interest in books generally, explaining that I had written Mrs. Wagner who had catalogued to scrapbooks partially, to have a go at the particular field. My letter must have been lacking in clarity.

My second secretary departed for the wars today and much of my mail awaits the coming of my first secretary later tonight, -- I hope.

And tomorrow is Primary Day in Louisiana, which is actually Election as you know. For the first time on record, there will be a polling place on Melrose, -- in the new Pecane House, hard by the store. Heretofore everyone from this section has gone to Montrose but because of the increase in colored voters, a place here in the river bottoms has been provided so that people of color may not feel intimidated by the white trash living in the hilly section just beyond Montrose. I believe 107 are registered for voting in this neighborhood, so the work of the Board shouldn't be too arduous.

The best news I have had today arrived in the interruption between this paragraph and the foregoing. My secretary, No. 1, arrived and so I have been able to have a little chat with you, as of Tuesday, last past. This letter should have arrived on Saturday, of course, but must have been delayed over the week end in Bayou Hatches, for the postman was early on Saturday, leading me to believe the general thinness of the post was due to his departure from that quarter before the T. and P. train had run.

First off, let me thank you again for having so thoughtfully provided me with the ribbon which makes type writing ever so much easier, since I don't have to thump quite so hard and besides, the ink is of sufficient darkness so that I can tell at a glance if I have written on a page or not.

And before I forget it, let me speak of the print you are having made of the Madam with her scrapbook. It is certainly kind of you to make the inquiries and put through the order. If you will kindly let me know the charges, I shall be glad to ask the plantation to defray the same, and if it is just as convenient

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for you, I should be glad if you would keep the film and the enlargement for the time being. I shall send you sections of the manuscript from time to time and pictures to illustrate the various sections so that you may have a complete lay out of the work as it progresses, thus being able to determine how things are jogging along. I shall keep some of the illustrations that are here until after Dr. Wilkerson has made his rounds. From him I may be able to demonstrate or rather determine if he sees eye-to-eye with us in the matter of making the book, when printed, suggest a scrapbook, and perhaps he may be able to supply us with some of the reproduction work of the snapshots, although, since the plantation will assume these costs, it may be just as well not to let him do any of the reproduction of the snapshots, since that would naturally give him the impression that L. S. U. had a prior claim on the manuscript. That will leave us free to submit it to Hastings House for an opinion as to whether the thing has any commercial value before we finally turn the item over to L. S. U.

I want to find out from him, too, if L. S. U. can publish several photostatic reproductions, as for example, two or three pages from the Open Door Guest Book and so on. I suppose publishing costs may be involved in the number of such differing types of print, and after discussing such matter with him, we can the better decide on how much we are or are not limited.

I shall also ask if glossy prints are imperative for reproduction, for I have a couple that are 5 by 7 inches but with a dull finish, - one of the "Madam weaving and one of "Mme. Aubin-Reque. And speaking of the latter snapshot, I should like to digress for a moment. The photograph was taken by Franz Blum in 1933, I believe, and shows Mme. Aubin-Reque handing something to her son, Denis, both faces profile, while Lyle's back is to the camera. What Lyle would have loved about the business is what the Madam wrote in her own hand on the back: "Mme. Aubin-Reque, Lyle and Denis Reque."

The Reques would most certainly be surprised to know they had a member of the family named Lyle.

In the matter of the humming bird bottles, I hope you will go to no rush and absolutely no trouble about sending. After all, if we send them this September or next Spring, so far as the Sterns and the Baldwins go, that will be plenty of time, and if we don't get around to send them at all, they will never be the wiser.

A negro from Red River came to see me today, saying he had heard of my interest in his boy's wood carving and that when the youth returns from pushing lawn mowers in Shreveport next month, he will send him around with samples of his handicraft. He was surprised when he saw Clemence's things and said his wife paints, too. I am wondering what will turn up from that quarter. Again thanks for all.....

4315

Tuesday, July 25th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that even though the postman jumped us on 1st class mail today, he brought me a foot square, but thin, card which was a complete surprise.

To tell you the truth, it never dawned on me until I had actually opened the package that it might contain a phonograph record. And then when I saw what the package held and then when I discovered the Tchaikovsky opus within, my enchantment knew no bounds and again I had to ring up another staggering digit to all the happiness flowing to me from you.

A prolonged week end, including holidays on Monday and today has probably been the reason why my Reading Machine has not been returned. But with tomorrow's dawn I shall begin worrying the State agency responsible for its repair, for naturally I am consumed with impatience to have a go at the Romeo and Juliette Overture forthwith and straight off. If the machine is delivered to me on the morrow, however, I am going to try to restrain myself until the close of day. What with the elegant moonlight nights we are currently enjoying, I think it will be swell to place the machine on the back gallery and trying out your musical contribution under the aegis of a mellow moon and billions of fire flies.

I shall report on whatever success attends this "fete musicale en champagne", and shall regret only we aren't absorbing the delights together.

Following a particularly busy morning in a half dozen directions, you can picture my surprise when, between 12 and 1 o'clock, Sister, the 3 children and Nina blew in. Something had been said, following J. B.'s visit to Shreveport, that they might come down in the middle of the week, but I hadn't supposed the middle would begin much before Wednesday, and had their plans been changed, I shouldn't have been at all surprised.

But here they were, as noisy as usual and I believe we are to be honored for at least 3 or 4 days, assuming we survive. The first thing Sister delegated Nina to do was to get in the car and go to the nearest henkey-tonk to get some whiskey. But Nina came back empty handed, naturally, since today is Election Day and no liquor is being sold, and no henkey-tonk even open. Nina seems to be remarkably noble or stupid, I can't figure out which, to bother with such a bag.

4316

With Sister's usual naviete, she assumed I knew nothing about domestic bombs bursting in air in the Shreveport area, and I let her rattle the whole thing off as long as she pleased. Some place or other, perhaps she had brought some with her, she had succeeded in getting an edge on, and the talk ran on endlessly, prospects for the future, the wisdom of suicide, the best steps to be taken in trying to effect a reconciliation, etc., etc., ad nauseum. She folded up her beard immediately on leaving the supper table while Nina accepted Celeste's invitation to spend the evening yonder. Naturally I was delighted to close my own door on that side of the world and open it on the quiet of the white garden where I have been sitting for the past couple of hours in company with the Dark Duke and his brother, both of whom you have met. And mighty pleasant it was, too, relaxing with people having the stability of kind hearts and a sense of humor.

Election Day at the local polling place went off ever so quietly. Shortly, I shall have to turn on my radio to see how far out ahead Senator Long is running.

Last night I listened for a little while to some of the final campaign speeches which certainly were dull enough. I was struck by Senator Long's assurance to the electorate that he stood for progress, Old Age Pensions, etc., and that he would always oppose "Socialized Medicine", as had all his family in the past. This sounded so odd against the backdrop of reality, -- the big Charity Hospitals sponsored by the Longs and scattered over the State, not to mention their participation in the health program, as headed in this Parish by Dr. Knipmeyer, with free clinics sprinkled over every Parish in Louisiana. I don't know what people mean when they use that trick word combination manufactured by the American Medical Society, -- "Socialized Medicine", but whatever they have in mind, it is bound to be expansive and all inclusive if it anywhere near approaches what Louisiana has to offer by way of free hospitalization and general medical care.

Swinging back to the presence of the disturbing influences currently let loose upon us, I am going to try to get something positive out of all the din and hubbub. Perhaps I shall be able to get Nina to concentrate with me on a sketch for the end papers for Plantation Scrapbook. Nina is a good artist, and it will do no harm to try to get something out of all the confusion obtaining at the moment, but I reckon it will be a miracle if I succeed.

But enough of such speculation. Besides the hour grows late and I would probably do well to give "Sleep, kind nurse of man", an opportunity to do a little of her business, since tomorrow and the next day and the next will probably be enervating enough. But if the machine comes through and night comes on, it will be so pleasant to contemplate utter relaxation on the back gallery, thanks to the comforting strains issuing from the magical gift your generosity brought to hand this day.....

4317

Wednesday, July 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

To hand not one but two elegant letters, together with their manifold enclosures, testifying to the vast industry to which you have devoted yourself too arduously these more recent week ends. "We ain't got to catch a train" the Madam used to say, in referring to an absence of pressure, and I pray you to proceed on that tack, for the days in Manhattan are too busy and the weather too sweltering for you to push yourself so hard. Do please go slow.

I shall not collapse tonight to the tune of Tchaikovsky, for my Reading Machine hasn't come through as yet. I talked with Mrs. Coombs this morning by telephone regarding it and am hoping to have luck before the week end. Her household is in a momentary flurry, it seems, what with her son who is studying medicine, has been called up with his Marine or whatever unit, and departs on Friday for Paris Island for intensive training before heading out for the Pacific. I always think it a pity when studies are thus interrupted, for too often, after service in the field, the student seems to find the life of a scholar too tame on his return.

And mya I thank you for all the fascinating details you had for me regarding the Walter Whites. Truly you are extraordinary the way you can throw open doors on vast perspectives at the mere mention of a name. I had heard nothing at all about all the points you covered and the details concerning the Whites in India. When I re-read the book, these epilogues will make the whole business so much more interesting.

And thanks, too, for telling me of your viewing of The Titan. You covered the details so interestingly that it was like hearing of quite a different work of art from the one Rudolph touched on. I had been particularly curious to learn something about the producer and several allied details which you covered so completely for my delectation. Surely there should be more films like The Titan. And in using the word "film" reminds me that for my secretary, the word "film" seems to be one of those trick ones, -- I suppose almost everyone has such, which cannot be managed easily. The word appeared two or three times in your letter, and each time he pronounced it as "flin".

"The Prophet in the Wilderness" which I am impatient to read has the sub-title of "The Africa of Albert Schweitzer" and is by Hagedorn or some such. I take it to be the same book you were so kind as to let me borrow some time back, and subsequently returned, the one containing the picture of the Congo "African House".

4318

5181
Sister
It would be difficult for me to describe the pitch at which we are temporarily living. The racket and hubbub is constant and the flow of alcoholic beverages constant. And naturally the country is a vast bore for one never capable of entertaining one's self, with the net result that the time and energy of other people have to be imposed upon during all the waking hours. I am hoping tomorrow may see the end of the current ground, although one can never guess who any scheduled may be altered from second to second by the lightning like changes of the erratic and inebriated mind. Toss in a measure of quarrelsomeness with her children and an impulse to start arguments over nothing at all with her companion, and you have some sample of the brew that bubbles constantly in these parts.

Fortunately for our side, she indulges in the tendency to get going leisurely in the morning, and that affords me some opportunity to plan, if not completely carry through, a few projects with Nina, who is certainly an accomplished artist.

Nina's work
Early this morning, for example, she and I roughly sketched out a working sheet for the end papers of Plantation Scrapbook. Nina has done work of this type for publishers and is well prepared therefore, both from an artistic and practical point of view, to carry the thing through. She is taking the sketches home with her and will transfer them to bristle board, using the proper inks, etc., and so return the same.

The balance of the day when not distracted by all the hurly-burly, she devoted herself to doing a sketch of the Chapel in charcoal. She will also take this home with her and sketch in the black and white elements required. Naturally I regret that all this cannot be accomplished here and now, but that is impossible and so one can but do the best one can. And the chances are pretty good, I believe, that the work will be executed and sent back alright. Eventually we shall see which will be better for illustration for the Scrapbook, a flashlight picture of the Chapel or this black and white sketch, and if the variety that the etching might lend is not required, we can use a snapshot. There will be one advantage of the sketch, - somewhat in the "daddy Snaydam" manner, however, - for Nina has somehow contrived to get the salient features of three walls of the Chapel, while a camera would probably be able to cover but two.

In the midst of trying to effect some of these things, we were constantly interrupted and personal friends of Sister, who by chance, passed this way, contacted her and added to the confusion.

Well, so things turn momentarily. Personally I abhor troubled waters, but if one is forced to be in the midst of them temporarily one might as well fish for whatever may be present, I suppose.

4319

Thursday, July 27th, 1950.

And so, if I had only been smarter, I might have saved all that talk about the Elephant and the Butterfly, and merely sent along the enclosed snapshot that would have explained all.

I guess the other enclosures speak for themselves. A week or so ago, I wrote the single word, Hey, on a sheet of paper this size, and folding in a butterfly lily, sent it along to Georgetown. Hence the opening salutation from one Anne Parish, who, I take it, must have responded favorably to the treatment of the "big bad Wolf".

In spite of all the hubbub going on today, I somehow got an opportunity to run through the Memorandum as of November 17th, 1948. I had no idea it could have been so bad. You were certainly charitable when you remarked it might need some editing. Editing it slap out of existence would be the only way to correct it, I think. I guess it's unfortunate for others that I can't glance through what I write for could I do so, surely many of the out-going pieces of mail would never go. Although the particular one under discussion was written after a particularly trying day and under adverse physical conditions, there seems to be scant excuse for it having been so lamentably contrived. Leston was pretty terrific, but he at least had the virtue of brevity.

Zelma, whom we saw in the road, marching to Arenbourg, came to see me this morning before the Knipmayers arrived. She had just had a letter from her son, Little King Solomon, from Fort Riley, Kansas, the first letter since he volunteered. She wanted to read me the letter wherein the little one asked her to give me his address, hoping I might write him. I acted promptly and kept the Knipmayers waiting until I had finished, for the child probably needs letters more speedily now that he will later. And I had much to tell him about his local friends, like Little Blam and Log being widow gentlemen at the moment, and about the rival meetings at St. Augustine's Church on Little River and the impending happy next Sunday morning, and so forth and so on. I feel sorry for some of these Cane River negroes, so obviously part and parcel of these rich river bottoms, and obviously destined for so much longing for home when they find themselves in such strange places as Kansas or Korea. Some of them, like Log, will come back again, apparently unscathed by their experiences in the Army, while others will probably never come back, and, I suspect, will never be the happier for having jockeyed themselves into other ways of life to which they will never accustom themselves entirely.

2162

4320

Madam Rand and Frau Poupler came by to see me about 2:30. They had skipped the big house on their way through the gardens in order to get a briefing before having the ~~panorama~~ panorama of domestic bliss in the Wenk menage outlined for them by an expert. They encountered the latter half an hour later, but I was glad to leave them to cover all that by themselves, and I never did see the Rand contingent again.

Mina But while that business was going on, Mina and I could discuss some final details of the proposed sketches she is doing for the Scrapbook. She is certainly a gifted artist, -- little Miss A. declares her to be the most talented in Louisiana, and I have a feeling however she finishes up the things, they will be fine. Let us hope circumstances distract her into becoming a Ramsey in the delivery section.

When the Rands departed from Melrose, inviting Sisiter and Mina over to the camp, they sent an invitation to me, but naturally I demurred. The Shreveport outfit itself finally go under full steam in a Northerly direction between 7 and 8 or perhaps 6 and 7, and the profundity of the peace now settling over the place is all pervasive and invigorating. On parting, the final shout from the car was: "I'll see you next week".

but I'm hoping this was merely a friendly gesture and uttered with no expectation of realization.

Quite by chance today, I stumbled over the reason for at least two of the recent enlistments from the Cane River country. I was wondering if the same reason applies in other sections of the country where the rolls suddenly swelled astonishingly. I was talking with two of the youths, scheduled to depart for the wars next Thursday. One of them said:

"Three years went by so long in passing. And then with the hundred dollars a month the Government will furnish us for schooling, we can by us a fine car."

For the first time I considered the general educational pattern of veterans returning from service, and realized for the first time that nearly all of them, with the exception of Log, had invested their monthly educational stipend in antiquated horseless carriages. For so many, old and young, a car has become a symbol of success, and even though one has no place in particular to go, the car is nevertheless Exhibit A of economic emancipation and the possession of one, whether it functions or not, is almost imperative. Ten years ago, every youth simply had to own a horse of his own, now it is the horseless carriage that moves into the front row of things desired. And so, with luck, my 2nd secretary at 20 may have one, and if lucky, will wreck it the first day, as some have done, and thus escape up-keep....

SSCA

4321

Friday, July 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your envelope of amplitude in this morning's post, with your grand letter and the manuscript of Aunt Benjamin.

And what a splendid suggestion regarding the Prudhomme letters. I am so glad you have seen Uncle Narcisse's house -- not to mention Uncle Phanor's with its nice little avenue of oaks.

I think everybody interested in old Louisiana, except those possibly concentrating on slot machines or some such, are primarily concerned over the ante bellum aspects of the region. The letters you mention will undoubtedly supply some direct or indirect sidelights on pre Confederate War doings and will therefore make excellent filler.

Somewhere among the local "treasures" is a volume entitled Matchitoches here or some such, having most of its contents devoted to doings of the Prudhommies, Buards, Hertzogs, Lambres, etc., including some genealogical notes, excerpts from private letters, etc., and some of these, pasted along side the letters you mention ought to add some interesting details to what was going on in the suburbs of the Melrose metropolis. If memory serves, all the Lestan Diary is in the same book, and that we shall scarcely be able to make much use of, but we can glance over some of the other things and see what we can make of them. I should be able to find the book between now and about Tuesday, I should imagine, and I shall send it along. Keep it as long as you please, although eventually it should be returned to the local repository.

If I can track down the item, and I'm sure I can, it will contain a most fashionable picture of Narcisse Prudhomme and wife in the very front of the book. She is wearing a costume so very much after the manner of Charlotte of Mexico while Narcisse, seated, looks just about as messy as did all men in the costume effected at that era. I don't reckon we shall need to have it copied, but if for any reason we should, when having it printed, we should have an extra one made for Madam Cloutier, perhaps, since she would undoubtedly be fascinated to see this tintype of the former owners of her home. The Madam has often spoke of the picture to me and how she obtained it. She visited the old place just as the Prudhommies were leaving it. All the furniture had been removed, and Madame Narcisse had lingered on to attend to a few details when the Madam arrived. The Madam remarked upon the interesting looking trash being swept out and asked if she might have the old newspapers and photographs which she was most graciously accorded,

.....please.....

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4322

although the Madam said she felt quite sure the Prudhommes all thought her out of her mind, asking for such sweepings. There was some conversation with Madame Narcisse about the picture of herself and husband, but she seemed to set no store by it. It may have been a Daguerreotype of which she had other copies, and that this picture which I recall distinctly as being in the book, is an enlargement of the smaller item taken in ante bellum times.

Prudhomme letters
I am so glad you mentioned the notation the Madam made giving an account of how the copies of these letters, translated, came into her possession. I think it would be a splendid idea to Preface them by quote her directly, for that will keep her interest or presence to the fore, and at the same time put the matter in a clear light for the million Prudhommes, none of whom will ever read the book, and at the same time will undoubtedly delight the translator and her husband, the latter being a prominent architect in Shreveport.

Switching to the contemporary scene, I cannot tell you how pleasant it was today, - the peace obtaining hereabouts. Many of my friends of color who had vanished from the local scene as soon as the sound of the three day tornado arrived, again put in their appearance, and although all of us, including Celeste, still proceed at an unnatural pace, still the calm after the storm is promising, even though none of us have as yet recovered from the enervation that invariably obtains during and in the wake of such a visitation.

Sister brought up a matter for my opinion that floored me by its stupidity. She said she thought she would suggested to the Estate that she be rented the big house for \$60.00 a month, so she could retain or chase out any servants she wanted or didn't, and so that she might tell all the members of the family to keep out of the big house, - that is everyone she doesn't like, which covers all the Henrys except J. H. I couldn't believe she was serious at first but then it dawned on me she was. She asked my opinion which she didn't want really, but she got it anyway, and of course I pointed out that it wasn't likely the Estate would approve such an arrangement, for in the first place they couldn't possibly have the vaguest notion of renting the house and secondly they all considered it their old home and as a place to visit from time to time. But she brushed such considerations aside and actually hot-footed it to the store and laid down the proposition to J. H., who of course dismissed it as so much tomfoolery. He is quite disgusted with her and he told me, among other things, that he had advised her she had better be trying to get on with other people before long, for sooner or later she would have to realize that there are other people in this world apart from herself. What a stupid goose she is, and yet, after all her cackling, it does seem good to have it quiet again. Please don't drive yourself endlessly on week ends or in between in the Scrapbook business.....please....

1331

4323

Natchitoches Lore
volume

Sunday, July 30th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I found the volume I had been searching, - Natchitoches Lore, it seems to be called.

I have run through the table of contents and discover it contains rather less than I had remembered.

It will go forward with this post. Keep it as long as you please.

I have checked a few items in the table of contents, but more with a view to calling your attention to them than with any idea of recommendation for considering them as being possible material for our project. Your first impression as to their general appeal will suffice to decide if they should be considered. I haven't read any of them, and so cannot speak with authority as to what they cover.

I thought they might lend themselves in part to the ante bellum section of the Scrapbook, for anything about this region could be inserted there and still bear some relation to the volume itself.

The only other thing in the package is a spray from the bay tree growing in the garden in front of this house. I thought you might like its pungent fragrance, --if it hasn't all evaporated before reaching your true hand. It is the leaf of this specie of the laurel family so popular with Louisiana cooks for the seasoning of things roasted. I might paste a few on me, what with the intemperate thermometer readings.

The expression of hope as voiced in your letter reaching me Friday seems to have born fruit, for on the following day my second secretary tells me he went to town and took himself out of the service to which he expected to be called this coming Thursday. I didn't know such slight of hand things could be accomplished by the mere twist of the wrist, and I asked no questions. I hope he is really as completely out before getting in as he seems to think. As for my part, I ask no questions at all.

In Saturday's post came the enclosed note from Madam Trichell. The letter was read to me in something of a rush between pilgrims arriving and departing and arriving, and so I am hoping I am wrong in assuming Miss Lillian

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thinks she has covered the Madam's propensity for Native
Iris by this letter and the foregoing one. Be that as
it may, let us hope more may be just in the offing from
her facile pen. If you get the impression, too, that
she is not contemplating anything further, do advise me
accordingly, and I'll give her a chunk or two, by way of
inspiration.

From "atchitoches I learn from a single source that
Caroline Dornon is in the pink of condition and suffering
from rheumatism in her knees. "In the pink with wobbly
knees" somehow doesn't seem to jibe, but I ask no
questions. She has had ample time to respond to my
letter suggesting she do a skit on the Madam's
inclination to plant anything and everything. Perhaps I
shall have a line from her shortly, and here's hoping it
doesn't exist exclusively in details covering the knee
section of her anatomy.

I shall be expecting something from Madam Wagner before
long, too. She is one of those unsatisfactory corres-
pondents like Edith Wyatt Moore and Carolyn Ramsey, --
seldom if ever writing a letter, but taking a month off
every few years to write a book.

I dined next door at 11:00. I believe J. H. was fixing
to take off for somewhere, -- more pecane conference, I suppose.

Madam Rand passed by Yucca a few minutes after I had
returned from dinner. She and the Doctor had been to the
baptism and I believe got a few snapshots, in spite of
the heavy water particles hanging in the air. She wanted to
talk about her conference with Sister the other day, feeling
that by the time Sister had returned here from the camp, she had
probably got the report of the conversation so mixed up,
nobody would believe it. I told her that is what I thought
the nicest thing about such reports were, --nobody believed them,
considering the source.

I am looking forward to the morrow when I hope my
Reading Machine will put in its appearance. I have been
without it but two or three weeks, and yet it seems
longer. I might as well admit I am much less anxious
to get the thing operating again for anything in the book
line.....it's the "Schaikevski Overture, to be played where
and whenever I please that especially impells me to "hold
the thought" but mightily. You, of course, are the only one
effecting a surprise for me in this. "Comeo and Juliette number
and I am glad for I shall love it the more.....

to gain some idea of the machine's operation and to see how it works
and to see how it works and to see how it works

4325

4325

Monday, July 31st, 1950.

Memorandum: I think I have been out for the last few days, and I reckon I didn't have
anything particular on the docket, and yet somehow I seem sur-
prised at what did appear.

For at 11 this morning, while I was going a mile a
minute on this machine, I thought I heard someone call, and
on responding, Lo! I found Carolyn, Helen and Mrs. Massie on
the back gallery.

Carolyn left before 12, and what with general amenities all
around, I didn't get much chance to chat with her.

But all three ladies seemed entranced with their Gatlingsburg
jaunt, and I take it Carolyn must have done quite a bit of camera
work, while all three sampled some of the furniture and trash on
sale, -- assume, since their respective station wagons seemed
pretty well packed.

Mrs. Massie is of an earlier generation, in fact in some
respects she reminded me of the Madam. Her husband is President
of some insurance company and I gathered that this trip must
be something of an education for this probably conventional lady who
has undoubtedly given much of her life to maintaining a lovely
home, entertaining "the right people" etc., etc. But from
this time forward, she will probably view a quite different
one from that to which she has been accustomed for 70 years back,
and having found a truer sense of values offered her more satisfaction,
I figure she is likely to find richer experiences immediately
ahead, now that bridge parties and formal dinners will not suffice
to satisfy her, even though it may continue to suit her former
friends.

Helen and Mrs. Massie remained after Carolyn had left, and
later in the afternoon Helen got a few shots of various landmarks
in the neighborhood. Somehow it seems as though morning is about
the only time to take most pictures of this type in this neighborhood,
so many of the places chance to face the rising sun. We ran by
Clemence's house and thence up the river on the opposite
side, noting that Madam Aubin-Deque's house is really falling
down, and we stopped off at the Francois Robieux home, and
that, too, is slowly dying of neglect. We also dropped by Beaufort
but didn't find anyone at home, and that somehow rounded out the day.

....

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Mrs. Coombs dropped by to report that Baton Rouge is slow on delivering the crystal for the Reading Machine, and so I shall have to practice patience a little longer in sharing the gallery on the white garden with you and P. I Tschakovski. I think Mrs. Coombs is inclined to be depressed about her son having to head out for the wars, feeling it may be difficult for him to resume his medical studies when he gets back from Korea or where ever, and so I was glad the ladies were here, for they all could talk about Gatlingburg and Washington and the like, and thus brush away the little gloom-clouds that probably be-set the Coombs horizon momentarily.

Fortunately today's post was light, for I never did get to contact a secretary, and so a couple of unimportant items, including one from Mrs. Brandon, will have to rest unopened until the morrow.

While the ladies were viewing the "Art Exhibit" at Clemence's, I dropped by the little house of the Dark Duke, hard by the Spillway. I found a wife very much under the weather, and sometime between now and dawn, she will be taken back to the Shreveport Hospital where I believe she had an ovarian operation a week ago.

I am not yet atuned to the speed with which hospitals pronounce their patients restored to health and turn them out within a day or two regardless of the nature of their complaints. So far as I am able to have been able to learn, none of these institutions have quite caught up with Adam Beaumont's: "Le!", but most of them appear to be pretty close behind.

Talk continues locally about the lady who lost the \$175.00 a couple of weeks back. Various witch doctors about the parish have put the guilty finger on the finder, - a cousin of the loser, but somehow the matter doesn't terminate there, and there is much discussion going on as what should be done next. Having the finder arrested is not to be considered for some reason or other, - possibly because that would be so simple, but rather a more elaborate business seems to be in order. Tomorrow the husband of the lady who lost the money heads out for New Orleans, having just received word from a kinsman in the Crescent City that there is a 1st class Voodoo Queen down yonder who can effect all kinds of magic with her black arts. I don't know what the 600 mile round trip to New Orleans costs, but if many more witch doctors are consulted either here or at such distances, the expenditures for accomplishing whatever is desired will more than exceed the \$175.00 already charged off, I should think. But one doesn't try to reason any of this out with the participants in the business, for there is an absence of reasoning, naturally, to begin with....

4327

4327

Postell visit
Rudolph - pictures of
a.c. & photos

Tuesday, August 1st, 1950.

Memorandum: Please don't do anything about it as yet, but in the back of your mind you might retain any impression that might register there by chance covering some ante bellum inventory.

Don't you think it would be nice to include one in the Scrapbook. I think it is always fascinating to run through the items on such a list, especially if one stumbles over such odd expressions as "One old ditto", as I did once in a Matches inventory. A new chemise was listed at so much, and was followed by an entry of "One old ditto" which I found delightful.

I shall make inquiry in the Matchitoches area, - Ora, Postell and the like, to see if they can't find us a Metoyer one, but if they should fail to do so within the next month, we might use any one you might chance to run across, styling it the inventory of a Metoyer contemporary. If memory serves, you mentioned one as appearing in some of the old Matchitoches records you examined at the Library some months back. All I suggest is that you keep green the source so that if we must, we may lay hold upon it.

For once, everyone didn't pile up on the same day, and I'm glad the Texas contingent of yesterday came yesterday and that W. D. Postell put in an appearance bright and early this morning, long before mail time and staid with me until noon. He is spending the month at the "ambre camp almost across the road from Beaufort.

I sketched our plans for the scrapbook to him and he surveyed the subject from several angles and came to the conclusion that it undoubtedly has a chance to enjoy popular appeal if we can make it seem to be more or less a composite or an epitome of all Southern plantations. As a citizen of New Orleans, he feels that if it properly contrived, it ought to appeal to lots of visitors in that city annually, and even might have an opportunity to sell in all metropolitan areas outside the South. He likes the idea of making the remarks covering the individual items as brief as possible, giving an air of freshness to the volume by the sheer absence of talky assimilation, leaving it to the documents and pictures to excite the reader's interest.

The Texas ladies spoke of a favorable agent in New York who has intimate connections with Harper's, - a person stemming from Texas, enthusiastic about selling the South. They will be glad to put in a word for us, should we decide Harper might be sampled. According to report, Harper is inclined to go in for photographic

Harper's

4328

books at the moment, and this might be precisely along their thoroughfare, and particularly so if pushed by an agent popular with them. We can mail this over in the weeks ahead, as another possibility before submitting the manuscript to Dr. Wilkerson.

In today's post came one large photograph of the Madam at her loom, together with several smaller snapshots, and Rudolph's remarks on her interest in weaving. I shall send the whole shooting match to you shortly. I think he has done very well, and with one slight omission or editing, can pretty well be incorporated just as is. I shall speak in more detail of this subsequently when, after a week or two, I shall have had an opportunity to get it and some other accompanying data properly wrapped up.

If Caroline Dorman in the plant department and Mrs. Wagner in the scrapbook section do half as well, we shall have taken a great stride forward.

The Postell sitting this morning covered a variety of subjects, only one or two of which I shall touch upon at this sitting. He says, for example, that Dr. Wilkerson is a very astute man and undoubtedly must have convinced himself by discreet inquiry before going far on the Scrapbook idea that the one he asked to collect the data for the volume was the best qualified. He says he is casual but cagey. If we can only emulate him, don't you think so.

Friend Postell mentioned Dr. Mattas. He says Miss Marshall who has done medical articles for publications in that field, is currently assisting the venerable doctor in furthering his monumental work on the History of Louisiana Medicine. He says that if the doctor can but survive a few more years, the thing should be achieved, and probably be printed in several volumes by Dr. M. himself, and will be a marvelous contribution to the subject.

Friend Postell thought my idea for the final entry in the Scrapbook original and intriguing, calculated to set tongues to wagging in speculation on an unspecified point. I told him it occurred to me it might be nice to quote directly from the Madam's tombstone or reproduce it possibly, and merely observe beneath it something like this:

"Of all people, Miss Cammie would have loved the example of human frailty this epitaph exhibits, as the error in the sculptured data reveals."

The End

The error, of course is that her death is set down as on November 18th instead of the 17th, but that need not be pointed out. Would you think that would seem too elusive to the publishers who might insist on footnotes and explanations.....

4329

Wednesday, August 2nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so let's talk about the Scrapbook a little.....

Today came a sheaf of letters from Mary Dagget Lake. I am sending them along in a day or two with Rudolph's article, and with the latter three suggestions for alterations in his text.

I have not read the Mary Lake contribution, all, apparently from the pen of the Madam. It seems to me it might be just as well for a comparison of these with those, --if any, -- appearing in the Carmolyte volume. If they be new, fine, and if they be duplicates, then you will already have decided about their possible use.

How would it be to have a chapter entitled,

"Letters Cammie G. Henry Liked to Write" and

"Letters Cammie G. Henry Liked to Receive." or

or some such.

The more I contemplate the matter, the more convinced I am that we are on the right track when we try to keep the volume as much in scrapbook form as possible, with as limited assimilation being used as possible. You have already indicated your approval of the idea, of course, but I refer to it again, feeling that if it can be sold to the publishers, the volume will, by its very brevity, offer something different and refreshing by way of approach that may appeal both to reviewers and average book buyers alike.

I shall write Helen tonight, asking her to bring along proper cameras the next time she passes this way with a view to getting a portrait of Log or Peter, as pictorial evidence in the contrast between the mulatto and the negro, with the Madame Aubin-Roque profile as representing the mulatto in the chapter on Cane River Color Line.

We already have a picture of Emma to illustrate that story, and with Log's picture appearing in that section or an adjoining one, the picture may be doubly interesting, don't you think.

4330

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Only recently have I learned that the average photographer takes poor pictures of negroes because most camera enthusiasts do not realize that the multiplicity of colors in the negro's flesh requires all kinds of filters to bring the varying lights into proper focus or relation, - the one with the other. The absence of such pre-requisites produces an effect suggesting the skin of the subject is solid black, not unlike the dead blackness of charcoal, eradicating many of the interesting lines and more subtle expressions and giving a completely false impression. I believe Helen has made a study of all this, so that her potential portraits may be particularly valuable and interesting.

I am enclosing a couple of letters from today's post. The one from Ora is particularly hilarious, in view of what my secretary says is an error she made in hitting a lick at the digits in the dates. I am responding that the lady of whom she speaks is bound to be a hard shell Baptist "baptized in 1947 and married in 1747" or however the thing goes.

As for Miss Nellie's letter, don't bother to transcribe it, please. My secretaries could get no where with it, and possibly you can't. But if you can, and I beg you not to struggle much with it, you might merely mention any point she may stress particularly. Otherwise, fix if she doesn't underline anything in particular, just let the whole thing go. I wrote her yesterday, prior to the receipt of this letter, and so she will not be expecting one from me within the near future.

Referring to Ora's letter again, I have responded telling her of the recommendation I made in writing to Essae Mae a few years ago concerning the wisdom of having the State Library house the private collections of ancient maps and papers and documents dealing with early Louisiana, and the suggestion I made at the time, - in a prospectus, - that this material be typed, photostated or micro-filmed as the individual piece might merit, with a view to the State Library branches in all the State Parishes being used as agencies of the Baton Rouge Repository so that such research material might be made available through these branch libraries to students who might know of their existence through a complete catalogue of the same, and ability to borrow individual items along the lines that ordinary books are kept in circulation. It seemed to me that this idea, apparently buried in Essae Mae's files, might thus be brought to light, either in the current study being made in Baton Rouge to which Ora has been invited, or through the article she plans to write for a autumn Library Bulletin. Thus, by round-about means, perhaps, something will be effected after all.....

Old records
Repository

4331

4331

Thursday, August 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum;

Comments to your nobility as of Sunday last past came to hand in this morning's post.

Even as you expressed yourself in your letter, so must I at this point say I am incapable of knowing where to begin saying thanks to you for all you do for me.

And may I congratulate you on your excellent suggestion that Robina look over the Diary, holding red pencil in hand and striking out anything she felt might be better left out of print. Not a child of the Madam ever knew she kept a Diary and I shall not mention it to anyone. Quite probably none of them will ever more than turn through the pages of the Scrapbook anyway, - except Joe, - and although Celeste and Frances (Paynie's wife) may read the thing, whatever reaction echoes in the family will be but second hand repurussion.

I shudder at the amount of labor involved in this transcription and the pile up of higher thermometer readings in the midst of your labors. You mention attacking the Open Door next. I pray you to go slow, and as for having it here when the Wilkersons come, that doesn't cut any ice at all. I think at this moment, at least, that I shall merely show them possible sources of data and a few pictures of some of the buildings, but shall not go into any examination of individual documents at this initial sitting. If they were advancing money for the job, that would be quite a different matter of course, but since it is a labor of love, they can wait and see how the finished article looks, and they perhaps will never even see that in manuscript form, if we find Harper or Hastings or some such discovers some commercial virtue in the thing.

I sincerely appreciate your kindness in going to all the trouble to set me straight regarding the Gustine business. As you pointed out, there are errors in Mallam Gustine's work, - quite a good deal of it, - both work and error, I believe. She is certainly mistaken about Rebecca being the niece of the four Machez doctors, for she was the only daughter in the family, having married old Stephen Minor's son, William J. Minor, and that is why her bust by Lyon used to stand in Oakland, but only Heaven knows were it may be now. I should have spelled Lyon with an "s", - Lyons, - the Machez sculptor and in no way related to our Lion.

Machez
Sculptor

Lyons.

It was the m...

1884

4332

It was the mulatto child who received the Texas property, and he subsequently moved to Missouri, and it was his children, as I understand it, who figured in the trial you mentioned, calling for settlement there to their Cherokee property.

Mrs. Weaver was wonderful, a life long sufferer from some oriental dysentery that should have enervated her completely, was remarkable to have done all she did. She was equally baffling to me, in that she depended on so many others to dig stuff up for her in patches where all this business was based, and yet, after journeying as far as Melrose from her home in Texas, never did make the remaining 149 miles to see the place and the records herself, even though she had sufficient energy to dress every night for dinner and all such nonsense while on the plantation.

But let me get to two other points: -

first, - the enclosure from the pen of Father Baumgartner to the Madam. It seems to be pretty good, but I suggest you hold it in a separate Baumgartner folder a little, for I think I may be able to tack down some other things from his facile pen concerning Cane River personalities and folk ways, and eventually, in making a transcription of some of these, or excerpts from some of them, we may not require the entire letter enclosed herewith. It's going to knock the local mulatto gentry plumb flat, - these letters, and the Holy Ghosts are going to fume and figit, I suppose. The nicest thing about the current enclosure is the fact that Father Baumgartner in reserving a couple of lines, indicates that he has no objection to the balance being used for publication, - probably a rare thing in the handiwork of the clergy. We shall decide as we advance if this letter and subsequent ones I may discover will go under some chapter about the Melrose St. Augustin's Church, or in quite a different category, - such as Cane River Color Line. I think Father Baumgartner was a pretty good historian; but like all historians, his work is subject to subsequent correction as data, not in his possession, brings other records to light. I think we don't need to point out or even give much thought to these points when we quote his letters, for they are from his pen, and he is responsible, and besides, nobody will read the Scrapbook for its historic finer points.

In this same mail, but under separate cover, I am sending the envelope just as it came to me from Rudolph, with all its contents, to which I have added one page of notes, suggesting three minor changes or additions that seem pertinent. I have merely sketched the sentences to be inserted, and leave it to your own ideas as to precisely how these should be worded. He will not mind the corrections and I shall advise him of them later. But please don't rush into doing anything more than you have to these hot days. Do take care of you. I shall eventually return the snapshots to Rudolph, but you might keep them for a while.....

1884

4333

Friday, August 4th, 1950.

Memorandum:

You will like the enclosures. There isn't anything particular in Dora's but he is obviously in a gay mood. Little King, sitting off in Fort Riley, Kansas, where ever in the world that is, is writing the best he can, poor child. The frequency of writing which he mentions seems startling, but is more than a mood of expression than a reality, I guess. He puts in the word "While", to indicate his intention at humor. I have often wondered where this custom started. Many of my colored friends in dictating letters, have automatically thrown that word in at the end of a sentence. At first it seemed odd to me but now I am quite accustomed to it. I take it that the word must be thrown in as a guarantee that the reader will be assured the statement isn't supposed to be taken too seriously.

It's odd how many people piled up constantly from day to day this week. I had thought I might escaped being honored today, but I guess wrong. But fortunately there were no pilgrims, for it is altogether too hot for touring.

Mrs. Coombs dropped in with clothing from her son's wardrobe. There are shirts, pants and shoes, some of which will be put into circulation immediately, and others held for winter when cotton money has evaporated.

And before Mrs. Coombs (interruption) -- before Mrs. Coombs left, Ora arrived, -- quite unexpectedly. She wanted to talk with me about her impending visit to Baton Rouge, the purpose of which she mentioned in her letter of a day or so ago. We got nothing done so far as reading & anything went, but we did cover quite a bit of ground in Parish and State combinations, both family and political.

She said she had been keeping one ear to the ground for possible tremors from the Wilkerson region. Only one point of interest came through, - and she was not positive about it, although it is her understanding that the L.S.U. Press is two years behind in its publishing schedule. With manuscripts accepted in 1948 not likely to appear until the winter of 1950 - 1951, there is some question as to when 1950 - 1951 manuscripts might hope to see printer's ink. Isn't it good to have this slant, for it seems to me excellent munition when one wants to contend with the Director as to

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dates of release and so on.

We had no time to go into the Plantation Scrapbook, and I merely sketched out roughly to her as the general poans for the Table of Contents shapes up. She was floored to learn the Madam had ever kept a Diary and said she would rush out and buy a copy of the book regardless, and that she felt heaps of people up and down the State would do the same thing, for there probably has never been anything published in the present century from the diary of a plantation mistress.

Well, we shall see.

She did mention that she thought Bolton had done some stuff on Marie Therese Coin-Coin (Mme. Thomas Metoyer), without knowing who she was. She is under the impression the documents concerning her and other personalities of the Spanish or rather the French colonial period were translated and incorporated in his book. Should you chance across anything of the sort, it might be worth while to keep Marie Therese Coin-Coin in mind.

How you have ever found time to dip into the Spanish Records with all the stuff I have been tossing in your direction by way of manuscripts. But it strikes me that you might run across a pretty inventory in said papers, and if so, it will be nice to keep one in mind to be employed as indicated in a recent letter, should a good Metoyer one not be located among the Metoyer papers.

Tomorrow morning Celeste and Madam Regard skip down to Alexandria. They will pick up their nephews-children at noon but before doing so will call on the Mazettes. Charles having been discharged from the hospital, and he and I having taken a house in Alexandria. I shall be interested to have a direct report regarding the status of that household and a guess as to how soon they will be venturing this far afield.

The weather continues sultry, with much humidity, but no rain in this particular area, although scattered showers all up and down the road. We are almost in a drought right here, but thanks to the heavy dews, things continue to grow lustily, and the Arenbourg children seem to be particularly healthful in appearance. On Monday a patch of grass caught fire on the terrace at about the spot you snapped the pictures, but was easily stamped out. I am hoping to get it ploughed again soon, and that will tend to eliminate such hazards from the terrace for the balance of the season.

The cotton fields are a lovely sea of green, the plants almost up to one's waist. Now and then one catches sight of a bee that has already started spilling its snowy cargo, but it will be a couple of weeks at least before busy fingers really start working on the downy fleece.....

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Sunday, August 6th, 1950.

Thirty millions of times would be insufficient to express the delights at Arenbourg, following receipt of your greetings on its birthday yesterday.

And may I say that the humming birds were mighty tickled, too, and want me to convey blessings on their behalf. The Sterns and Baldwin branches of the same feathered family will undoubtedly express their appreciation a little later, what with their gifts going forward on the morrow.

For no other reason that because it was Arenbourg's birthday, I made a round this morning to commune a little with a friendly spirit that always seems to hover ever so intimately, and particularly so, following an intensification of the same because of honors conferred early in June. It was so pleasant on the terrace a little after 6, and we made a heap of plans as to what would be undertaken next.

We really could stand some rain, but even in spite of that, things are looking lush and green. The crepe myrtles are particularly gay at the moment, and even the little ones around the elephant traps are unfolding their alternating watermelon red and white sprays and clusters with hilarious abandon. The butterfly lilies, although in no instance especially placed to their own advantage, are also perfuming the air wonderfully, and, except for the weeds, you would find the place altogether enchanting on such an anniversary.

Your particular Fortune cape jasmine is bubbling over with new growth and a deep-deep color of green indicative that it is quite in tune with the joy of living that spills out all over the place. One of the little camellias doesn't look too pert, but if he doesn't make a go of it, we shall replace him with another when February or March puts in an appearance.

The trumpet vine is a mass of blossoms and the palm, planted early in July, is already putting out new leaves. All in all, it was pleasant to be at Arenbourg this early morning, and what with it being the Sabbath, it was especially nice just to sit for a while and contemplate early June all over again.

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4336

0391, 11th August, 1950

The heat continues to discourage few pilgrims, it would seem. The quota wasn't large, but it came at precisely the wrong moment, just as I had figured out how I wanted to contrive a sentence that had been log jamming a lot of stuff that I thought would slide along fairly easily after the verbal dislodgement. It couldn't have been too good, however, for the whole thing eluded me, but shall probably catch up with it again on the morrow.

Curious margins, this, don't you think so.

Last night and again this noon, I heard Governor Long's address to the special session of the Legislature. It was brimming with political chicanery, his poverty and such clap trap. As in the case of his address at the regular session in May, he seemed to have great difficulty getting out the words, and in the middle of the thing, - either for the theatrical effect or for physical reasons, he turned over the balance to the Lieutenant Governor to complete. The Longs are certainly flirting with the colored vote and in the present speech he outlined plans for a school he thinks may be a model for the nation, - an institution for colored wayward girls where they can be taught a profession. He didn't say what the professions proposed would cover, but it would be easy enough to wise-crack that it might just possibly include something that for them would be in the nature of a post graduate pursuit.

Dr. Rand brought Ellen over this afternoon and took some pictures that we may be able to use in the scrapbook, - the one of the Weaving House and the one of the cannon having little Ellen in them, and I think especially that with the cannon might be particularly charming.

I declined to return to the camp with them, but conceded a point and crossed the cotton patch a little later, just before sun down. I sat on our bench and I need scarcely need say in which direction my thoughts turned. They have wired up the big cedar and the doctor played a heap of 33 revolution records that went ever so palatably with the grand food and drinks, and the hour, - some Guy Lombardo things, Big Crosby's Deep Purple recordings, etc. I spoke to him about Rose Room with which he is unacquainted, but he wants to try it. I didn't know it before he told me that R. C. A. is having a struggle in the recording field with Columbia, R. C. A. turning out disks that require 45 revolutions per minute as opposed to Columbia's 33. I wish Baton Rouge would eventually make up its mind with my Reading Machine for my impatience to try out the Tchaikovsky recording is reaching the frazzled stage.

It was first dark when I returned home. Some ebony would-be worshipers came and I liked the candles in your candle holders, and a great spray of butter fly lilies in a porcelaine basket, standing before the Blessed Mart, in made

4337

4337

Monday, August 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Summer School seems to be out rather early for Pat, who came home tonight about supper time. It appears that whatever the college military training thing is, the students, if qualified, are being called into the Army as officers, - Lieutenants, I believe. This has an odd sound about it when paralleled with his cousin, little Stephen, a West Point graduate and veteran of 2 or 3 years of service in Europe, and Pat likely to start out with the same grade.

I saw Madam Regard alone for a few minutes this morning. She told me Sister is passing this way on Thursday, leaving the children here while she heads down the road for a visit with her uncle at New Roads. It seems she telephoned last night and talked for half an hour or so with J. H. telling him that her husband now asks for a divorce. Curious, in a way, how we expect the wife to ask for the divorce but instinctively take a second glance when it is the husband.

And in the Legislature, things continue their topsy-turvy way. The Governor today submitted a bill which will undoubtedly be passed promptly by his "trained seals", calling for an election wherein the people of the State are asked to vote favorably on an amendment to defer the 1950 State elections until another 4 years has rolled round. If this required an election to eliminate an election, I wonder why the regular one should not be held, except, of course, the machine is trying this bit of chicanery to give themselves an extra term without any opposition politically at all. The Longs seem to be courting the colored vote more assiduously than ever and, after all these years, roads long overdue in regions populated by negroes only, are up for extensive repair or complete new building. And so, at long last, the negro is likely to come into his own with the ballot. And what the results will be will be interesting to observe. Since Reconstruction much of the rural balloting has been in the hands of the hill-billies, unable to read or write, and now this is to be balanced by an equal or greater number of negroes in the same benighted situation. It ought to be quite a jif before enlightenment gets spread very wide or very deep, and in the end it will be interesting to see which side calls the tunes.

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And now, if you don't mind, let us talk a little about

Plantation Scrapbook,
the Melrose of Cammie G. Henry.

The title suggests nothing to the average reader, of course, as to the geographic situation of the place. Plantation puts is South of the Mason-Dixon line, but that's about all. And perhaps this is advantageous, since, for popular appeal, the field should be as broad as possible. Perhaps I have frequently mentioned before that the author, publisher and friends of "Wildflowers of Louisiana" might have enjoyed wider pulling power in the sales department if the title had read: "Wildflowers of the South" or some such.

But once the Scrapbook has been placed in the hands of the reader, he will naturally want to know where the place is. It seems odd to think of a Scrapbook having an Introduction or Forward, and yet under the circumstances, I believe this will be imperative.

Perhaps that article stirred up several years ago with a view to using it in connection with some of C. Ramsey's photographs might serve the purpose. Frankly, I don't seem to remember much about it, other than some vague phrases suggesting the remoteness of Melrose.

Off hand, I should guess that an Introduction to any book is usually written after the text has been completed, but as this particular volume is being contrived along a pattern never before undertaken, if we get the cart before the horse, it will be neither out of line nor harmony with the methods pursued.

Please don't bother to dig up this article, if you chance to have it, for there is lots of it time yet before we have to sleep in the last page which will, in this instance, be the first.

I have run through the illustrations, - actual photographs, thus far assembled, and find there are about 30 odd for probable use. I envision about 20 more at least. I'm wondering how such a number fits in to the printing costs, etc. Perhaps a chat with Dr. Wilkerson may give some hints as to how publishers generally might re-act. And speaking of Dr. Wilkerson moves me to refer to the Overdyke letter enclosed. The book he did before Houses of North Louisiana, as I recall, has been in the hands of L. S. U. Press since 1948. This seems to bear out Ora's information that the Press is running years behind. ... Got the bottles off to New Orleans and Waco, and our new ones installed at Arenbourg. It's so nice of you to make this celebrations possible and the birthdays mean so much....

4339 Clemence - map
Yucca Portraits of
Color

Tuesday, August 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Yesterday and today the postman traveled light, and so I had better brace myself against the morrow when he will probably spill a sackful, whereupon all my two secretaries will go "under ground".

The enclosure from Nina is of secondary interest, but suggests depression. The little 6 inch Martin that stood here in my window went forward to her, following her visit, in appreciation of her efforts in behalf of the end papers, chapel and Yucca. How nice if it will only give her inspiration to bring the three to a speedy conclusion, I hope.

Clemence came to see me this morning. I can't think why it never occurred to me before to inspire her to do some pictorial maps of Melrose. I suppose she has never seen such a thing of any place, and so we had to start from the ground up, as it were. She is quick to catch ideas, and was entranced at the prospect of contriving one. Ora had brought her a box of new paints the other day, and this seemed the perfect medium on which she might try her hand anew.

One of the fascinating elements in Clemence's mind is the speed with which she catches one thought or another and the inability of her mind, apparently, to grasp certain others. For instance, after half a century spend on the margin of Cane River at this bend of the river, she didn't seem ever to have grasped how the stream might look when sketched on paper, as from above. Just before she came, I had smoothed off some earth hard by the sun dial, and so on its unrippled surface with a stick, I sketched out the river for her, starting at Arenbourg, following around by Grandpere's Church, bringing it back to Melrose and thence down as far as her house, pointing out each twist and turn in the direction of the river as indicated them on the somewhat earthy map we were amking. She seemed as delighted as a child, and the whole thing turned out in her mind to be something more by way of preparations for making a mud pie than for clarifying a simple geographical picture. She seemed entranced when I stuck twigs in the ground to indicate St. Augustin's Church, Melrose, etc., and eventually we returned to the cool of the back

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gallery where she found a piece of paper and a pencil. But after a couple of tries, she found it impossible to get down anything suggesting the course of the river, and finally she asked me if I would "mark" Cane, Little and Red rivers for her and put a cross where the different churches ought to be. Now you know me and the inimitable maps that only I can contrive. But "mark" I did, on the bits of stationary we had at hand, on the covers of a couple of old shoe boxes, even on a handbill calling for the election of Russel Long, - and with it all, Clemence was delighted. And so when I was about "mapped-out", she gathered up her pieces of waste paper and her new box of paints, and headed down the road. Along about now by lamp light in the little cabin you have visited, you may be sure she is painting pictorial maps madly by lamp light and by tomorrow's dawn will probably have a dozen of them pinned up to dry and will probably be heading up the road for me to "mark" some more. Clemence is a sight.

An interruption as between this paragraph and the above. Elam came to see me, -- remember Elam. The other evening, just after Adam Elam had returned home from the hospital with a new baby, Elam's 2 or 3 year old boy got hold of some kerosene and drank some, - they couldn't guess how much. And so he was rushed to the hospital where the coal oil department was taken care of but it was discovered that the child actually had pneumonia, and what with the excitement of the new baby having just arrived, nobody had noticed the older child was ailing. Well, the usually magical drugs and after a few days in the hospital, the child is alright again, and his papa dropped by to tell me so. What a pattern of sunshine and shadow with the contrasts so constant and common place that we are bound to take them all as a matter of course.

And now, momentarily before folding, I want to "think out loud" a little in reference to the Scrapbook. Don't you think it would be fitting to have a brief section on Yucca Portraits of Color, using Grandpere, his son, his daughter, the Black Swan and Father and Son. I am trying to make up my mind as to the handling of these pictures. I could do quite a lot with Grandpere and the Black Swan, of course, and using Lion as the focal point, do quite a bit with the Father and Son item, sloughing off the daughter and the son of Grandpere with a few manufactured sentences of no especial point. It seems to me something special should be done about these pictures but I am not sure if they should be dealt with not individually but in a brief chapter as a group, or each given a page. Wouldn't it be nice knowing what a publisher could and would do with such pictorial and written stuff. But of this I shall ponder upon more, and now to fold, and things are so pleasant at Arenbourg, what with the birthday and all....

Scrapbook

Yucca Portraits
of Color

4341

Wednesday, August 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The postman brought your elegant letter of Friday this morning.

It is good to know things are rocking along and I am particularly delighted to know that you are busying yourself with interior decorating this week end, - surely a hot enough time for doing nothing at all, - but I know the results will make you feel amply justified in the expenditure of energies required. And so, thanks to the presence of a couple of canvases, you will automatically move in this general direction, and it is pleasant to picture you thus being prepared for the impending season when, as the weather tapers off from cool to cold, your sanctuary will find you more constantly there and surrounded by little souvenirs that will re-create a kingdom within the space of your immediate domaine.

It was kind of you to say you thought the Memo of Nov. 18th, 1948 to be useable. Naturally I didn't see anything untoward in what you said about it. The truth is that it struck me like my voice did once, the first time I ever had it played back to me from a recording. Frankly, my first impulse was to run and hide my head under the nearest sofa. The same sensation and impulse struck me when I read the Memo. Perhaps it could be fixed up a little, some things eliminated and a phrase or two added, if we should decide to use it to bring the Scrapbook to a close.

I have asked Kate Perkins to do her Memories of Melrose at the turn of the 1900's when she came here to teach Stephen and J. H. A card from her today states that she will do the thing and asks about how many words she may use. I have responded, saying she can go slap ahead and if the thing runs into too many volumes, we can always alter the original plan and bring the thing out serially. Surely "Le Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans" isn't extraordinary, but for a person to remember 50 years back and be able to write intelligently about it, well, that must be something else again. The things she will not set down, episodes of those years, would be hair-raisers but couldn't very well get into print. But there will be other points, commensurate with the general continuity of the other material being employed, and I think this impression fresh from the pen of a participant of life at Melrose in those years ought to be engaging.

Scrapbook

Kate Perkins

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I'm glad you make something out of the rather dark snapshot of the clematis-hedera combination. Did I mention I suggested Anne Parrish might dip her pen in attar of roses and strike off a Fable of the Butterfly and the Elephant. Do keep the picture if you like it. If I ever send anything, do consider it as yours unless I tie a string on the thing verbally. Botanists from the college and a few other people like Dr. Rand, up on their Believe It Or Not floral curiosities have declared it to be just one of those things that probably haven't or hasn't happened before and is not likely to again. In the first place, these two types of plants don't usually flourish together; seldom do the two of them reach such impressive heights, and never does the immovable body and the irresistible force operate in substances so comparatively fragile, each being super-sensitive to the proximity of the other.

Quite by chance today I ran into another rather rare combination. The stalk of a butterfly lily had grown 8 feet, straight up, at the end of the front gallery, nearest the gate. You may recall an elder bush grows there, too. This morning, following a slight rain last night, a cluster of butterflies unfolded at the top of the stalk which just by chance happened to be nesting in the midst of four great clusters of black-black elder berries. If not quite so beautiful, it was just as striking in appearance as the elephant ear business, the waxen white butterfly lily blossoms set off in such striking contrast with or against and encircled and entwined by the black clusters of the elder berries. Two such unique combinations, all in one season, and within 6 feet of each other seems almost too much, - a little bit like Ida Mazurette getting sympathy for breaking one leg and merely hilarity for breaking the second a half hour later.

And did I mention the the great Orinoco bananas on the front gallery are beginning to come into flower, huge red blossoms that drop off one petal a day to form a tiny banana where the petal leaves the stem. It looks as though there might be a bumper crop this year, and my boudoir will be gay with strange designs and shadows when November comes and the crop has been harvested and hung up to ripen. New Orleans people gasp at the height of the banana plants which are still growing, declaring those in the Crescent City never attain such stature. I wonder if this can be true, and if so, the reason, for the soil isn't unusually fertile along the edge of the gallery, although the plants do get water from the overhanging eaves. But come to think of it, so do those along the store, and yet they aren't half so high in spite of the greater fertility of the soil, that space once having been a lot for the farm animals. Well, however, it may be, Yucca exudes vegetation this year, and I had better see that the moss doesn't start growing on the old Underwood.....

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4343

Thursday, August 10th, 1950.
Memorandum:
Your grand letters of the 6th and 8th to hand in this morning's post, making me twice glad when the postman knocked a couple of times".

To plunge right into the unpleasant things first, I must say I can imagine nothing worse than having to spend an evening on Staten Island, and in such a hubbub. It's bad enough to think of spending such a Wenk-ish evening to begin with, but then to have such a raft of brats thrown in to boot, - well that takes the cake. I reckon you have probably been fairly lucky in having seen Tilloah no more frequently than you have during the past few years. Certainly it must be a relief not to have to brush into Himalya any more often than you do. And that their eldest daughter should have insisted on taking over Greenwood is another thing. It's astonishing how when a person sets his mind to something, regardless of how others may be involved and inconvenienced, he can drive slap through without batting an eyelash. I must be dumb, for not only would I lack such nerve but what is probably worse, it would never occur to me, supposing I lived in New York, to suddenly head out for Fizzleville, Ohio, with a view of or to appropriating somebody's camp for a vacation, - just regardless. But I suppose that's one way to success, if success is getting what you want, but personally I wouldn't want any part of it.

But enough of such a tirade about people who really, I hope, don't count so much. What is pleasant is to read an account of your arrangements in your refurbished sanctuary. Somehow it gives me the impression that a bit of Old Louisiana had just drifted in under your careful guidance, and in such a subtle manner that probably no one but you and the girl friend, on entering the place, ever dreams of having moved into a new and different world. How wonderfully true is the ancient saw: - not half the world know how the other half lives. Often do I ponder on the thought that the greatest artists I have known have not been those who painted the finest pictures, composed the finest symphony, written the finest ode, but rather that rarest group of mortals who have recreated a little segment of heaven in the mundane little corner of the world where ever chance provides a home. Truthfully, is there then so very much difference between, - shall I say, Madame Vigee-Lebrun and little Miss Lydia Lee of Lyme. In d'Arctur's et al.

One secretary failing me tonight, I did not get an opportunity to run through the duplicate pages of the Pilgrim article you attached to your letter of the 8th. How nice that you were able to get it off to Collier's, and how nice that you have in mind Reader's Digest and Pageant as 2nd and 3rd choice. The thing could do quite a bit of bouncing about before reaching a deadline for pre-pilgrimage printing. Off hand it seems to me the monthly issue is set up about 3 months in advance, so there should be ample opportunity for rejection slip hurdles between now and the hour when the presses start turning for January or February publication.

I reckon the Open Door will be coming along in a day or so, but I gasp to think of all the work it involved, all the labors on the Pilgrimage article, all the other research you have been doing, not to mention Madison Avenue, the Concourse with a dash of Staten Island thrown in for good measure. I pray you not to wear yourself out, and under no circumstances let anything in the Scrapbook line rob you of all your rest and relaxation. Pay no attention if I keep on sending stuff when you are already piled high with previous shipments and a billion other things. Let's be sure not to let the thing get you worn out, for after all, no book on earth is worth an ounce of strength which you require to maintain your own good health.

"I'm glad you found the Lake letters good. We can use them in that section tentatively styled: "Letters Miss Cammie Like to Receive". or rather Letters She like to Write".

In the group that could go along with Lyle's is the enclosed from Rachel Field. I ran through not quite all of it, and ever so quickly, but it seems to me it is the type both the Madam and the average reader would enjoy. It seems to me the little account of Framington, - where her people lived, or was it Stockbridge to which she referred when describing the town, --that section might be especially appropriate in the Plantation Scrapbook, giving as it does, a little reminder of the appearance of things in other sections of the country.

Unless I missed some phrase or sentence as I galloped through it, there are, but two places where anything should be eliminated.

First: the phrase or sentence about doctor bills, and I believe that can be skipped without making any break in continuity. It had reference, no doubt, to her sister, a case of arrested development mentally, or some such. The other omission might be "typographical, when la Gignan's name could be dropped without anyone ever noticing it.

Your inquiries regarding Robina's acquaintance with the Diary is answered in the letter enclosed. A notation in the Diary, quoting the appropriate paragraph might be in order. ..And may I say thanks again

Friday, August 11th, 1950. But

Memorandum: This morning, for instance, at 4:40, I flew up from the north of Yocco, and as I glanced down from the

And here another week has about played out, and where it has gone, I wouldn't be able to say. My only regret is that there has been so much talk buzzing about my ears, and so little work done on my own hook.

The postman must have started off on his rounds today before the trains had arrived at Bayou Natchez, for there was no 1st class mail. That means a pile up for the week end, and catching a secretary between Friday night and Monday morning requires

If I were a bit more resourceful, I might start charging pilgrims a fee, every person in each tour being required to read at least one page before starting out, and then I might be heading in the right direction. But even so, the condition in which some of them arrive convinces me that I probably wouldn't be able to make any sense out of what their alcoholic voices had to utter.

For the first time in ever so long, I had the good luck to stumble on to a broadcast last night that made good listening to a program that wasn't all boogey-woogey or Bible slapping. It was the Mutual system, with Cecile Brown of Mutual, and one reporter each from the N. Y. Times and Herald Tribune interviewing Mr. Wallace, late of the Progressive Party. It struck me as being completely unrehearsed and while the former Vice President parried the blows skillfully, I must say the questions were pertinent and pressing. I believe this is a new series scheduled for every Thursday night, with a different headliner of the week scheduled to be interviewed by a different set of reporters each week. If the succeeding programs hold up to the initial standard, the thing ought to be refreshing and instructive as well as entertaining.

I was perfectly enchanted this afternoon along about first dark when my old friend, the mocking bird, nesting in a neighboring crepe myrtle, flitted down to the gallery pavement to have a go at the crumbs Grandpa had left. This is the first time I had seen my old friend, and I was afraid he had gone the way of the quail, Cardinals, chimney sweeps and mosquitoes. His re-appearance makes me wonder if perhaps some of our other feather friends haven't

Grand, enjoying the results of your handiwork which never fails to
 during the Southern trip on my night table, and it is going to be
 Beloit mo.....

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withdrawn rather than folded up completely, I hope. But if this may be true, it certainly must have raised hob with their domestic arrangements, assuming that this is nesting time.

One can't help wondering what most go on in the bird's mind, all this ghastly dew business falling from on high in almost daily doses. This morning, for instance, at 4:40, there was a great roar to the north of Yucca, and as I glance up from the gallery, a big old death-dealing airplane shot slap through between the tops of the big pecane trees, and just above the sundial, leaving a great train of smoke in its wake, as it climbed skyward to miss the Yucca roof. At 4:40 these mornings, the day hasn't really opened all its blinds, and the dark mass of the plane coming out of the shadowy tree tops with such a roar must have frightened the birds in the bamboo stiff.

The plantation has just purchased a new spraying machine for the pecane trees, supposedly able to spray 12 trees a minute, which is ridiculous, of course, because who could even run to 12 trees in a minute, let alone halting to spray them, but be that as it may, the same machine, hauled on a trailer by a tractor, is capable of spreading poison over ten rows of cotton on a single trip across the field, so I should imagine this outfit may eventually give the plane a run for its money.

The air was heavy with the dust from on high as I marched up the road to Arenbourg. We get the benefit of the aerial death smudge at Arenbourg, of course, and I guess it does no harm, and I must say the elimination of insects this year is remarkable, and, - let me pause to knock wood, I haven't run into any bees or their hives this summer.

Back at Yucca, I had pilgrims arrive before coffee time, while I was in my bath, and I continued to be bothered by succeeding groups until after 4 this afternoon. The consequence is that I accomplished little work, but I did do a couple of pages on Clemence which seemed to get going pretty well. From here on, I have only to do a little quoting from a couple of newspapers and that will be that section for the Scrapbook, what with a couple of pictures of her thrown in for good measure. Curiously enough, I don't seem to have a photograph of any of her handiwork, but some friends of the Worsleys who were here this summer took one or two shots, and I shall ask them, - now that they have returned to California, - the friends, not the Worsleys, if I may have a glossy print of one of these, don't you think so.

And now for a quick tub and to bed, and have the pictures taken during the Southern trip on my night table, and it's going to be grand, enjoying the results of your handiwork which never fails to delight me.....

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Sunday, August 13th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The weekend has been awfully warm and for no apparent reason, I seem to have the sniffles.

Saturday's post was light. The enclosures aren't of any special interest. In contrast to his earlier one, this letter from Little King seems to indicate quite an advance in his literary ladder. I tucked a couple of nickles for stamps in my last letter to him, bringing forth this somewhat astonishing reference to "finance".

I made a listing of the books the Madam read during her last year at Melrose. I think they should be shuffled around a little so the variation may be a little more striking. Whatever you think you be an interesting arrangement will suit me to a T. You will note I jotted down a sentence at the head of the page, but this was merely to indicate the nature of the list, as opposed to another I had just partially jotted down, covering certain scrapbook titles. I shall append to the list a suggest for the paragraph heading the list. To keep the volume as scrapbook-ish as possible, it seems to me the paragraph or two is sufficient, for if people care to read the thing at all, it will be for the list.

While it occurs to me, let me respond to your inquiry about the old log cabin, and whether it should be eliminated from the Diary. I don't think so. This must seem paradoxical since I recommended that reference to it in Rudolph's article be omitted, and then proceed to leave it in in the Diary. Off hand, it seemed to me that in Rudolph's letter the item appeared too prominent, and somehow suggested that a scarcity of buildings in this area impelled its importation from Navajo Plantation up near Grand Ecure. The way the matter was referred to in the Diary, however, didn't seem to imply quite the same thing, - hence the seeming paradox.

I value these inquiries so much for it greatly assists me in keeping matters more clearly in mind, since it is impossible for me to re-check on them, save by your references now and then, and I hope you will always continue to mention them as they come to mind.

Sunday was pleasantly free from pilgrims, thank heavens. J. H. went to St. Louis yesterday and so I dined with Celeste, Madam Regard, the two grandchildren and Pat, and we really had a gay dinner.

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I'm glad I didn't have to go to the Rand camp today, for they must have had a posse, all in all. And after dinner, they all, or some of them, went to Cognac where a baptising of 20 or 30 converts has held along Cane River. On their return to this neighborhood, - Cognac is 8 miles or so toward Montgomery, some of them stopped by to see me, - Dr. Rand and Ed, the Boltons, the Bradfords (no kin to Roark), and so on.

They were naturally tired out after so much boating, baptising and touring, and our conversation wasn't much. Dr. Rand did have something amusing to tell about the cook, however, -

He said she came to work a while back, dressed up like Easter, and Mrs. Rand asked her the occasion. The cook explained she "was a-fixin" to get married in the afternoon. Blythe asked her to whom. She replied casually,

"Oh, to the papa of us-es little girl."

Surely it must have been inspirational that Dr. Rand brought me a quart of Four Roses. My head feels so stuffy, I think I shall drapa portion of the same about my tongue when I fold up my beard tonight. After all, I don't want to feel too stuffy tomorrow when a hundred or two colored teachers are scheduled for an afternoon tour. This is usually the tour I like best during the whole year, and I certainly don't want to disappoint the ebony pilgrims.

And speaking of whiskey, I wonder if you ever chanced to stumble over an item, non-alcoholic, called Toddy. It seems to be a chocolate malted milk and comes in a tin can, a little bigger around than a silver dollar and perhaps 6 or 7 inches high. A year or so ago, somebody passing this way left some crackers and things, all in tin cans, and this particular item somehow got lost in the general shuffle. I was throwing out trash the other day and pitched the Toddy into the trash burner, but rescued it by what impulse I know not. I tried it the other day and it is grand, just about one good big glass full in a can. I mention it, thinking you might hesitate momentarily as you survey the shelves in your favorite grocery store, and your doubts may dissolve as to its goodness, for it really is good. While I was drinking it, my thoughts were somehow circling about the newly decorated boudoir and I found myself thinking how much you, too, might enjoy the same beverage, chilled out of the ice box, on these warm nights.

But the hour and the page converge on the time for folding and so I shall grab at one of the Four Roses and leap.....

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4349

Monday, August 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice, what with the postman disgorging all sorts of mail today, and while I haven't done much about any of it, save your two letters with all the evidence of your nobility and handiwork, still, I find myself avidly awaiting the next go-round as usual.

The Open Door came through safely, too, but I haven't opened it tonight, saving it until the morrow. Both secretaries were in town doing work for Dan, and in consequence thereof, one never did show up and Mr. Brew seemed weary with well doing on his arrival, so I forced myself to be content with reading your two letters and the one from Mr. Stearn (Stern, I guess), and will hold the other things, including the Door until the middle of the month, which, to my astonishment, seems to be but a few hours away.

And may I tell you how floored I am by all the valuable things you had to cover in your letters and all the grand transcriptions. I ran through nearly all of the latter and find them excellent.

And thanks no end for having adjusted the Rudolph article, which looks grand, and you were so thoughtful to put in the word "formerly" in front of the G. R. Smith title of yester year.

And how noble of you, too, to think of Ora and to send the special note. I shall pass it along to her in a day or so, saying it is from one of her secret admirers from afar. I am so glad to have such a comprehensive account of the volume on Spanish Documents up to 1781. And it was so good of you to mention so many interesting things. The presence of but two mills in Louisiana at that period is an arresting fact, - Opelousas and Natchitoches, and parenthetically, I am surprised I can spell the latter, for both of them are pretty nebular in my mind so far as their appearance in print may look.

Did I mention recently that a geologist passing this way the other day was entranced at finding the old mill stone forming St. Giffin's Fountain's base. He is returning for further study of it, thinking it to be a conglomerate stone found in but one locality where the Southern Appls dive abruptly into the Mediterranean. I

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assume the one mentioned in the 1774, - was it, - report had to do with a mill in town probably. Wouldn't it be odd if it turned out that the Yucca one was in existence then, and is one of the two mentioned. It is my understanding that the plantations around Yucca were opened up well before those in the Bermuda and Natchitoches area, and if wheat was being attempted in this area, as you suggest, before Indigo is mentioned, it is quite possible the mill may have been situated in the grain producing area which would be Yucca, no doubt. If they were importing wheat from France in the kernel, then the mill undoubtedly would have been in town where the boats would discharge their imported raw. I am so glad you mentioned the absence of Indigo and the attempt at wheat, for this was a twist giving Tobacco an edge on Indigo which I hadn't realized before.

The inventory you mention sounds fine. I think I don't know it. Friend Postell says he has a Prudhomme inventory, - a Jean Baptist Prudhomme, I believe, and may have a Metoyer one. Naturally we would like to have the thing from as near home as possible, but I don't believe the local one should be used if another gives a more complete or interesting picture of what was what in those days.

And while I think of it, may I ask you if I haven't been making an error in referring to the letter of such excellence, as from the pen of Aunt Benjamin, for somewhere way back in my memory comes the name of Aunt Hoppe, pronounced around here as "Aunt Whoopy". I have no doubt the Natchitoches Lore volume or even Lybe's Old Louisiana may have some confirming data on this point.

You have been having a little pleasant weather, comparatively mild for mid summer Manhattan, and I am so glad, for it really does give such a breathing spell in town where it never cools off at night. Here we continue to boil in the day time. I continue to snuffle and cough and sweat but I don't seem to mind the heat much, and haven't even had a fan turned on all day. I am glad I have no chills, which means what I have making me feel over stuffed in the head is merely a summer cold.

I accomplished little or nothing today, but perhaps that is just as well under the circumstances for I didn't feel much like working anyway. Besides, the pilgrims were pleasant and came at times that dove-tailed work out of mind. One Bill Adams, to teach History at the local college this year, was here with some gentleman from L. S. U. who is doing a thing on the Free Negro of the Ante Bellum South, and naturally was entranced. I also took over the colored hosts from Grambling College, and things were as pleasant all around as they were the last time. One thing is certain, I haven't missed my reading machine, and what with a New Moon yesterday, perhaps, with luck, I may be able to try out the Fantasia Overture on the back gallery by moonlight yet.....

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Tuesday, August 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:

What an unexpected plaisir to receive your grand letter in today's post, together with the translation of Madam Marco's epistle. That you were able to wrory through that is a miracle and my secretary remarked he didn't see how it was humanly possible.

What with all the grand items in yesterday's post, I didn't expect to receive another so soon, and so the surprise was complete.

Isn't it a pity that so many of Miss Nellie's friends appear to be having such a hard time. Perhaps misery loves company as the old adage declares, but when writing to her I believe in keeping the popular inscription of many an old sun dial to the fore:

"Others be-speak the clouds and showers,
But I record the sunny hours."

The Lord knows both Mrs. Moore and Mary Rhodes must be supporting a heavy yoke but so is Madam Brandon, and before I fold up my beard tonight, I am bound to write her a line or two that won't be too depressing I hope.

I smiled to myself as her own depressed mood crashed through the line wherein she discovered that there might even be something wrong with having butterfly lilies in such abundance. But perhaps she doesn't like perfume. For me the fragrance of their lovely flowers and such things as your Fortunis are never too intense for me, and it is difficult for me to picture anyone having too many of them about.

I'll send along Mrs. Massey's letter which came in today's post, too. Did I mention before that she puts me in mind of the Madam's little, about the same age, I fancy and of the same school but withal a citizen of the world. Her letter is kind but I don't need her statue. Sooner or later I shall angle a bit more for that unique old Metoyer Station of the Cross, still here on the river, and that will go ever so much more smoothly with the Chapel than a Waco Virgin, don't you think.

I'm so glad you mentioned your satisfaction with your new interior arrangements. Isn't it grand to have L.J. to comprehend their full import, and in a way, I think it rather nice no one else subscribes for somehow that makes everything about it the more personal and satisfying. Everyone in a while is somebody tactfully

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pointing out to me that none are so blind as those who will not see, and how often do I mutter in my beard how perfectly true is that statement and how lucky are we who don't have to lead the head-strong blind who are simply determined not to glance at a perspective on Paradise if it were suddenly made available, and heaven knows vestiges of Eden still linger on, primarily because of the handiwork of people like little Miss Lydia Lee.

I haven't felt much like gardening today, although my sniffles and bark are decidedly on the way out. Instead I did some tidying up here and there and among other things found what is probably a quite old Louisiana Historical Society Journal which I shall put in the mail. 2nd class, with this note. Just how you could possibly find time to glance at the Contents listing, I can't imagine, but I'm sending it along regardless, hoping against hope that you will drop labors in the direction of the Scrapbook long enough to relax a little every once in a frequent while.

Pat, who has always honored me with his confidence, imparted another item yesterday. His mother, Eugenia, has re-married, this time a man in Gulf Oil who has been living during the past two years in, -- of all places, -- Venezuela. Pat says they haven't decided, -- the newly weds, if they will return there or will take up their residence in Houston, -- also of all places, what with papa's Joe living but 40 miles from that Texas city. The Houston move at least ought to make it more convenient for Pat to make a round when heading out to pay his annual respects to both parents. It seems to me he got pretty much cheated out of parents in childhood. Perhaps that is why he seems to find Melrose about the only home he has ever known and why he is so considerate of me. Instinctively I thought of Pat when the Wenks were here last time. We were going to supper one night, and the little girl joined me on the brick walk on the way to the big house. Grasping my hand as we walked along she inquired quite candidly

"Are you really my uncle even though they say you aren't because you seem more like my uncle than the others."

Now that's a hard nut to crack and still step on nobody's toes.

And did I mention that Shreveport was calling Sister yesterday morning at Melrose. I am glad to say we had seen nothing of her and haven't since. It is my understanding that her mother-in-law is in a Shreveport hospital. Perhaps she will attempt one of those dath-bed reconciliation things which always seemed so dramatic and probably worked a heap more harm than drama before their influence was finished.

The new little moon has long since slid behind the Montrose hills, and I must get on with a few letters before I myself do some sliding, first over to Melrose for a slice of watermelon which, I hope, may still be in the ice box, a go at some fried chicken on the back gallery with Grandpa thinking of another cold fried chicken party, has been to my downy couch. Your letter today was so nice, my day, has been happy....

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Grandpa's photo of portrait

Scrapbook on Quilt to be rd.

Wednesday, August 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Here is just an idea, -- and what do you think....

"Grandpere, Ravaged and Restored" or some such title to accompany two photographs of the portrait, the one enclosed and the other of contemporary taking.

I stumbled over this snapshot today. It's a little elusive, perhaps, but they tell me that even in its present faded condition, one can readily detect some of the depredations committed by the Yankee soldiers who mutilated it when passing Melrose on their way from Natchitoches to Alexandria.

To your bright eyes, do the slashes and holes in the picture seem obvious. And do you think that if, for purposes of illustration, for the Scrapbook, the snapshot were enlarged, these would be doubly apparent, and particularly so when contrasted by an accompanying photograph, similar, say, to the one that appeared in the Picayune article in 1949.

And when the snapshot, if worth it, is enlarged, do you think the illustration would be more striking if the entire snapshot is shown or, by cutting around the edges, merely reproduce the section of the picture within the frame.

It seems to me that we could put in some extra data about Grandpere (1) and the Painter (2) in thus using both reproductions. The part about Grandpere, -- both reproductions appearing in the sections on Yucca Portraits, could deal primarily with his antecedents and career, while the mutilated portrait could, for by line stress the history of the picture, quoting from the Landsford letter about the artist, and brief mention of the history of the canvas and how the Madam acquired it, had the smaller likeness painted to suit Madame Aubin Roque's fancy, and the restoration of the original and its installation in the house, Yucca, where Grandpere was born.

All this is an idea which I leave it to you to decide. In making your decision, of course, you will find the determining factor to be whether the mutilations will appear sufficiently clear in the enlarged form to make it interesting. So much for the use of the thing. Personally, I think it would be a good idea of have two or three glossy pictures made any way, -- for your copy of the Scrapbook, and so on, letting me have the bill whenever convenient to yourself.

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Of the enclosures, you will find Dor's hilarious and Robina's informative. I cannot agree with the latter on one minor point, elimination of the names of the singers. Even, as she points out, they all may be dead and gone by now. I like to read the names of plantation people and having known other people who did, too, I don't think Robina's indifference to them is universal. But I shall not touch on that subject when I write her and we can easily slip them back into the script, if we please. In transcribing some of the old Natchez diaries and day books, how well do I remember how much more vibrant the whole volume used to seem when the names of the colored people appeared, --and how delighted I was when I ran across a name of ~~Hester~~ "Hester shoe Fanny", a chicken minder who was always getting herself put in the stocks.

In a separate envelope I am sending a rough sketch of what seems sufficient to cover Clemence's case. I have called her Clementine throughout because the item carried it thus. The snapshot enclosed with the article is by Helen Baldwin. Although small in its present state, it seems to me it is good. What do you think. There are others, -- one outside her cabin, one, one close-up and so on. Some people who were here with the Worsleys took a picture of the painting on wood in the Theodore Rousseau manner, and threatened to me send a glossy print of it. It would be nice to have a full page reproduction of her handiwork, I should think. We shall ponder the matter and see what others become available, after which I shall send same along. The one enclosed in the article in the accompanying envelope is the only one I have, -- that is, I have but this single print, although if we should misplace it, I have no doubt we could worry Helen into printing us another, if she could ever find the original film.

And in the same mail, -- I am sending a scrapbook about Melrose. I wanted your opinion as to its contents. It certainly has a heap of stuff in it. The array of quilts seems impressive, but will and should we plan on putting them in the Scrapbook. They are manifold in design and do represent a heap of the Madam's labor in the needle and thread department. And then there are other pictures, and a heap of papers and things. You will notice one somewhat hilarious sketch of Madame Aubin Roque by Lyle.

I suppose this package may reach you about a week from today, and when it reaches you, as it contains nothing else save stuff entered by the Madam, you will feel quite free to let it stay in its container until such time as the decks are clear, -- if ever, and you have a moment for such browsing, if that be possible.

I hope you will take weeks to consider if any of the stuff should be used, and what. Please don't jump into it, for there is no rush about returning the same before months have elapsed. Forgive all this chatter, please and I'll try to do differently next time.....

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a.c. - letters to
Madame Lake

The matter of the keeping of the letters in separate categories or in separate groups, in order to avoid questions of time, chronology, etc.

Memorandum:

This is going to be a hodge-podge letter because I shall leap from thought to thought as it comes to mind, relative to details concerning the Scrapbook, as they were mentioned in your perfectly grand letter of Sunday which reached me today.

And what a grand letter.....and so many words expressing thoughts so identical to my own that it almost seemed as though something I had written was being read back to me. Really monumental was early June.

First off, in response to your inquiry regarding the keeping of the Lake-Gustine letters in separate categories or in separate groups, in order to avoid questions of time, chronology, etc.

We are so lacking in good letters written by the Madam that I had even thought we might dump all the Lake ones, -- that is, the letters the Madam wrote to Lady Lake, under a heading that would suggest these letters were typical and many of those written to la Lake were offered for the readers' consideration, somehow contriving to let the reader suppose that since some of them did not actually call her by name in the salutation, one might assume they were to different people. There are so many letters from other people, written to the Madam, that if we aren't careful, we shall greatly overbalance those written by those received. Come to think of it, I don't see that this matters much. Off hand, without giving it much thought, I supposed we might do a correspondence section, with a little paragraph remarking the Madam's propensity for letter writing, state the primary and secondary reasons, -- her interest and affection for people, and her desire to keep in touch with what went on in the world of interesting people. Then merely state that here are some samples of

"Letters Miss Cammie Was Want to Write"

and

"Letters Miss Cammie Like to Receive."

It seemed to me that if identifying the people were required, it might be done by a footnote and not by a lot of talk before the letters were set forth, one slap after another. What do you think of all this.

The remark about Miss Sally's religion ought to stand, I think.

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The matter of the gambling official whose wife set aside his winnings to effect a divorce should be kept, but, as these people are still subjects of scandal, it might be as well to substitute for the word "Cloutierville" some such phrase as "in a nearby town" or "in a neighboring community in on Cane River". That would certainly let out any chance of a legal protest.

As to la Gustine's numbering of the "adam's sons, they actually were Stephen, J. H., Payne, Issac, Joe, Robert and Dan, - and about in that order, I believe. Isaac, named for Isaac Erwin, the Madam's grandfather, of course, died of influenza in 1918, the same year the Madam's husband died. Robert, I believe, is still living in the Asylum at Pineville, La., having been physically and mentally deformed at birth. His name was omitted in all the "adam's obituary notices, although still alive. He must be about 40. Parenthetically, the mere reading of the names as enumerated above gives one pause to consider the temperamental instability characterizing the progression.

Lad. You inquire about la Gustine's reference to a proposed book, "Lad". She wrote it. It was the same format as "Natchitoches Lore" but thicker. It had a splendid assortment of photographs. Perhaps the latter appealed to somebody, either in Shreveport or Texas, although that seems unlikely. Still I was unable to locate it in the big house immediately following November 18th, 1948. I continue to keep it in mind and perhaps I shall discover it some day but I doubt it, as several people have given me a hand in the matter, people like Dr. Rand, and thus far, the search has brought forth nothing.

I marvel at your remarkable capacity to re-create Lyle's letters from the entries made in your little black book, - and after all these years. His style was so unlike the run-of-the-mill compositions that being able to set them down in one set of symbols and then, after such a long interval, being able to re-capture them, represents something filling me with wonder and admiration. He always let too many months or years elapse between letters, but when he did get around to put pen to paper, it must be admitted he turned out something unique.

Signau And passing from the sublime to the ridiculous, I am enclosing a letter you were kind enough to share with me. I reckon it isn't of much moment, but I should have sent it back ages ago. And while on the subject of the writer of said letter, I might say that during her visit here a few weeks ago, no one made any mention of your presence in these parts. It's so easy to skip information when listening to those whose mind is forever busy on making itself the storm center of every old out-landish harum-scarum whim that jitters about in the mind like Mexican jumping beans, - and getting just about as far. At supper tonight, J. H. said he had heard nothing from Shreveport, but if the mother-in-law of Sister had been in a coma, they sure sent for the right person to knock her out or bring her to.....

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Friday, August 18th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your grand letter of Monday, enclosing the Ursley transcription, arrived in this morning's post. Also came with it the fat envelope containing the Cane River's Children of Strangers.

May I pin still another oak leaf with clusters on you for all your nobility and industry. When I merely contemplate what it means merely to dig up such items, so long buried in the past, I blush with embarrassment at the thought of just searching for the thing involves. I have not opened the fat envelope or any of the letters coming to hand except yours of Monday, - what with a crowded day and only a few moments with the secretaries, all of whom with the rest of the river for miles are up on the Joyeous Coast, having a frolic at "So-say-shun".

*Autographed
Label* Is't it wonderful how the Diary seems to dovetail with some of the other points we contemplate using, and I was particularly struck by this phenomenon in the section you quoted from it in today's letter. Sometimes the concept of the Scrapbook tends to grow dim as an item of interest, and especially at times when too much concentration on other things makes "book-writing" seem so secondary in importance. Then, at other times, when things are better in balance and letters such as yours arriving today, reach me, and then a re-examination of the project looks not so bad.

Yours of today was so important, for it was a breath of fresh air at the close of a day wherein atmosphere and people alike made it among the stuffier I can recall.

At Arenbourg early this morning I got things going in the right direction, but once back home an Alexandria telephone call from Mrs. Holoman, asking if she might see me tended to get things laid out in the wrong direction.

Just as I put the receiver back on the phone, a pair of arms encircled my neck. It was Sister. She and her noisy offspring had arrived quite unannounced after spending several days with her uncle in New Roads. That Wartelle widow, by the way, has remarried and continues to live on her plantation in the New Roads area.

Sister said the Wenks had called her on Monday, asking her to return immediately to Shreveport, what with the grievous condition

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her mother-in-law was in, but she had told them promptly she wasn't dreaming of cutting short her visit with her uncle for such a poor excuse as that.

I told Sister I would be busy all afternoon, and this with other circumstances, inclined to persuade her to cut-short her plans for dilly-dallying around here for the week end, and, following a particularly noisy dinner, she and her tribe pulled out at 1:30.

Mrs. Coombs and Mrs. Holloman arrived five minutes later, and I was enchanted they got here at the same time, for it gave me a momentary breathing spell while they managed the threads of conversation and I listened.

Mrs. Coombs told me of the resignation of President McGintey of the college, effective September 1st, so I reckon he will not get down to spend the day with me as planned. There was talk, too, about Governor Long forcing the head of the Welfare Department of the State to resign, - a splendid man and the naming of Senator Fredericks in his place, the worst example of politics being messed into Welfare that one can imagine.

Mrs. Coombs departed shortly and the balance of the tiresome afternoon was devoted to Mrs. Holloman. I find her more tiresome than ever, what with her scatterbrain mind doing such ridiculous things and jumping so madly from pole to pole for no apparent reason.

She says little Miss Alberta, with whom she dined on Saturday, is putting on a one-man show in September, after which she heads out for Ohio, and that they are already making plans to spend next summer's vacation in the Paducah, Kentucky area together. I reckon that might be termed "Going from bad to worse". - Melrose in May and Paducah in June.

Mrs. Holloman read me a copy of a letter just posted to the Negro Digest. It was unbelievably bad. They had asked her if additional articles could be supplied from this area about people of color. Her response was a detailed outline of the racial animosity existing in the Cane River country between mulatto and negro and how suitable this would be for articles for the Digest. Imagine. There was one line that particularly impressed me, for my name quite unexpectedly made its appearance as from out of nowhere. "I know of a picture of Francois Mignon, his arms around a negro, standing in front of a portrait of a white planter with his mulatto son, the three shades, white, mulatto and black, making a very striking appearance." Surely the Chicago Editors of the Negro Digest must be fascinated by all this, even though my own identity may be a little hazy in their minds. Really, you know, there is nothing truer than the statement that one is a fool to fool with a fool.....

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Sunday, August 20th, 1950.
Memorandum:

Such a strange week end, with only the continued sniffles and bark to convince me the pattern remains the same even though the details seem so odd. Take for example, the case of Madam Lake of Fort Worth whose letter, arriving in Saturday's post, will go forward to you in the same post with this. I responded with a line of condolence on Saturday afternoon, sending the letter to town by Eugene to mail it from Watchitoches.

Picture my surprise when a servant brought me a message from the big house at noon today, saying two lady friends of mine were there awaiting to see me. It was Madam Lake and her sister.

I had already penned her a second letter to follow the one of condolence, taking up the matter of the use of her letters. I was glad of this personal contact to accomplish the thing. She said when writing to me she had felt some people might feel she was seeking publicity by permitting the use of the letters but when I pointed out to her that by permitting them to be printed she was making a distinct contribution to the portrait of the Madam we are trying to create, she readily saw the light and, her sister concurring, said she would leave it entirely to me to use any part or all of them and their entire contents if I felt they would in any way help. It was nice to settle that point so promptly and to our own satisfaction.

But returning to Saturday's post, let me say how enchanted I was to have your grand letter and to take a quick glance at the swell job of Cane River's Children of Strangers. Your spelling of "Ile" in the Brevelle business shows your characteristic thoughtfulness and erudition. That seems to be one of those words which is forever getting spelled in two different ways, and I have no doubt that Father Baumgartner's spelling is correct. After all he hailed from Zurich, Switzerland, where his family still lives, and I reckon old Zurich is as likely to spell Louisiana names in their original fashion if any one might, what with both Switzerland and Louisiana being the hub of things in their respective parts of the world. In the mid 30's, I did a heap of reading about Fouquet and his property on Belle Isle, and I suppose that

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spelling being toward the last of the printed word I lingered over, stuck in my mind.

And may I say how glad I am you had the good luck to hear a symposium on Tolstoy's War and Peace. I should so much have enjoyed sitting in on that one with you. Every time I hear the name mentioned these days, I laugh to myself, recalling that a year or so ago I asked Dr. Butler for an opinion on one or two points on Dostievski's Brothers Karamazov, and he responded by a few bangs at War and Peace.

Personally I think the book too long in the War part. Tolstoy seemed to go at the military aspects of the Napoleonic fiasco in Russia with as much detail as Sir Walter Scott went into particulars about a crusader's trappings, - and the whole business bores me. But in the Peace part, Tolstoy really glows, for he had that same gift that little "arcel" was to demonstrate so much more exhaustively later, and when the novelist Tolstoy sticks to the boudoir and salon, he is grand, I think, and duller than dish water when he flounders out of the novelist class into the military camp.

The letter from Miss Nellie is much like her old self. Poor dear, she is certainly having more than her share of things to contend with. I hope she maintains her determination to head back for Natchez this autumn. Years ago the constant social buzz in Atlanta used to wear her out. It must be even worse now that she is older and has more handicaps. If she can just find herself an apartment in Natchez where she can close her door at will and be alone as much as she pleases, I shall be the happier for her.

In the sentence about Mary and her bitterness, it is interesting Miss Nellie refers to Mary's employer as "that Jew". For "that Jew" is Wilfred Guisenberg, or however the name is spelled, and a brother of Dr. Fred, Virginia Moore's husband, who performed the eye operation on Mrs. Brandon gratis. "That Jew", by the way, has courted Amanda Phipps for years, Miss Nellie's friend Amanda who hasn't yet acknowledged the pictures I sent her last May. A third brother runs a drug store in Natchez and his wife is sister to Harriet Dixon whose brother-in-law, Frances Dixon, as you know, is the husband of Virginia Butler, and so the Natchez family trees get so hopelessly mixed up and entwined that nobody with sense can make them out.

A new moon illumines the white garden accentuating the snowy clusters of butterfly lilies bending low at each end of the gallery and filling the night with sweetness. I'm tired, but before folding up I shall sit for a little by St. Giggins' Statue, a glass of chocolate milk in one hand, a cigarette in the other and Grandpa at my feet, dreaming for a pleasant half hour of other nights that somehow have set a seal on the whole place for me at this hour....

old
re: letters
addressed to
a.c.

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Monday, August 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

Alright, and just to be different, don't you think we ought to talk scrapbook a little.

In the same post with this Memo, I am sending a few letters which may be of use to us. I haven't read but a portion of two of them. I am not sure we would want to use any of the Anne Parrish one, but if we should, we might omit the reference to me, - for certain, - and leave it to you if we should or should not mention Josiah. If you think the letter of sufficient interest, - it will be scant at best, I might send a transcript of the same, with the omissions you deem best removed, after which I shall send it to Georgetown, asking the lady if she minds.

I think you will agree with me that the appearance of the pages from Eddy-Suydam are as artistic in their way as are his sketches. I read but one paragraph of a single page wherein he enumerated the names of a few writers he had hoped to visit but had been forced to delay the go-round. I thought this might be a pleasant flavor, but know nothing about the balance of the letter.

As for the others, I have read a line, but trust they may hold something of interest.

Please don't feel rushed about any of this stuff, and feel free to keep it just as long as you please for there is not rush at all about returning them, - this year or next, will be all the same.

The two 1864 letters in French are both translated, I believe. Perhaps we may use them in connection with a page about General Banks' Cane River march. I haven't definitely established the exact circumstances preceeding the writing of these letters. The family name is that of mulatto planters hereabouts. I take it this man and the others he mentions, were impressed by the Yankees and put to work in a camp in the Alexandria neighborhood. His hilarious reference to the negro suggests his dislike of them, and the fact that they are not among the laborers, pre-supposes it must have been these planters that were set to work by their captors. Local mulattoes had signed legal documents, setting forth to the Confederate powers prior to the advent of the Yankees, that their grandmother, Agnes Metoyer, wife of Grandpere, had been a slave, and as they were her descendants, - offsprings of a slave, were not liable to military service. The tone of the letters, dislike of their situation.

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obvious homesickness and recommendations regarding the care of their animals and little ducks and their love for the family give a glimpse one seldom runs across in the usual papers of the period. If I succeed in determining for certain that they were mulatto penned, I shall stress that point, of course, but if not, I shall contrive a sentence that will enable the reader to guess for himself if they concern white or colored people.

The letter from Nina going forward in this letter or an accompanying one speaks for itself. You notice I continue to excel as a map maker, even if she finds I put Melrose on two sides of the river. I have done her a most special re-draft, checking the same with Pat and Eugene to be sure my buildings are on the proper sides of the respective rivers and, for good measure, have even added an Indian mound for decorative purposes, although actually it does stand on the West bank of little mid way between St. Mary's and St. Augustine's Churches.

Little King's letter seems sufficiently brief. The word you may have difficulty with is supposed to be "item". I told him he might continue to do as formerly while in civilian life, - feel quite sure in using this house as a repository for any unspent cash, and that I would open his letters before the secretary arrived always, so that no one locally would know about the contents, and he could always refer to dollars as "items". I notice he thereupon referred to the stamp money as an "item" which indicates quite clearly that any currency will be thus labeled in the future.

Yesterday Governor Long headed out for a month's vacation in Texas. J. H. told me Senator Fredericks, still Executive Secretary to the Governor until September 1st, when he takes over the Welfare Department. Did I mention that the Senator had telephoned J. A. for a half hour's conference. I should love to know how much policy is to be attributed to the man who never would accept any political office and disclaims any knowledge of such business. It seems that when the Long regime stepped up the Welfare and Old Age Pension payments, they scuttled the 140 million dollar saving accumulated for the State by Gov. Jones. And then 10 million was transferred from the Welfare to the Highway Department, probably for helping in the election. Now the Welfare Department has begun scraping the bottom of the barrel and more money found by new taxes or funds transferred from here to there or somewhere, and probably the resulting chicanery will be at once to evil and so legal that everybody will be floored. It certainly is a fine kettle of fish the Longs cook up for popularity with the voters, and its a dumb electorate, fortunately for them, that lacks sense to realize it is paying too high a price for the frolic.

I'm afraid this letter has been on the dull side. I am glad to say I can't lay it on to my cold, however, for that seems to have definitely taken a turn for the better.....

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Tuesday, August 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your grand letter of Thursday, so delightful and so full of news, I find my spirits sailing high even though the physical self continues sort of droopy. Tomorrow the Rands are supposed to come this way, Thursday will be Knipmeyer, of course, and any old day might be Worsley Day, should the meandering course of my cold keep going. Frankly I doubt if this thing which seems to me making the rounds in this area is much of a cold but probably one of those periodic offms of influenza, for while the snuffle and bark sections suggest a cold the enervation doesn't remain seated in the head or throat but seems to spread equally all through the system, and, to quote an old plantation mistress,

"I ain't worth the killin'." Because of all the hurly-burly and do-nothing-ness of the past week or two, I haven't lifted my copies of Life from my desk where I have them awaiting a once over, and accordingly I am ever so indebted to you for mentioning the articles you did, for I had heard of none of them, nor of Elsie de Wolff's death. I shall look with considerable interest at the articles, for some of the people I remember and of course the Neailles-Maintenon business is particularly up in front in my interests. The flight of time blots-out many of the finer genealogical points from my memory but enough of the original framework remains in my memory to recall Mme. de Maintenon's bequest of her estate to her kin folk, the Neailles, and how young LaFayette married into the family and so on and so forth. It is heartening to know, - as I had wondered from time to time, that Maintenon, the estate, appears to have come through the last war intact.

And so old South America is again a stir. Heavenly day, what a flock of road-runners that tribe tured out to be. Let us both hold the thought that you may not be honored before they all get within ear-shot of the school bell and that each succeeding vacation period for them doesn't spell out a visitation by them on newed you.

The mention of Watkins Glenn, of course, brought up a lot of stothings in my memory, - the mention of it in A Clouded Star, the now visit through the Glenn "r. Belle and I made along about 1936 and so on. It's too much of a jaunt for a week end trip but it is feel lovely country for a summer's vacation, I should imagine. I have often wondered how the Glenn looks in winter time, but I reckon it must be closed at that season, - a gigantic inferno of rocks and snow and ice seems difficult to imagine.

3334

4364

You will find much of interest in your evening with Agatha and naturally I shall be delighted with news from the Rhineland. In a way, and I wonder why I say it, I hope Anita didn't talk, for it really doesn't matter, either way, but I just sort of hope she didn't.

And so your neighbors are Catskilling again this summer for the benefit of the dog. How familiar this sound applied to the General. By the way, I neglected to say that Pat informed me he attended a rather elaborate funeral for the General's dog in Baton Rouge last month, concrete vault, new blankets for the coffin, new harness and all an Egyptian Pharaoh might think up, complete with flowers, and lo! no sooner had the interment been made than the house and garden had to be forsaken as the property, a rent thing, was sold, and so, one may assume, this Baton Rouge canine Valley of the Kings is slated for oblivion, too.

And thanks for acquainting me with the contents of the Lake letters. I leave it to your own good judgement as to what we shall use. I suppose, after judging the stuff sent yesterday, plus some additional material that might chance to come to hand, you will be able to determine the balance better. Let me hasten to assure you that in view of Sunday's conference with La Lake, everything in the letters can be used in utter disregard of her over modesty expressed in her earlier letter. I am not surprised you found the Caromlyte book more as a backdrop for La Gustine preening her own feathers than painting a picture of the Madam. That would be true to form for La Gustine, as near as I can make out.

Friend Postell was here. Last year, after returning from the camp at Bermuda, you will recall he had to undergo an operation. This year, as soon as they arrived, his wife had to be taken to town for the same kind. Wasn't that odd?

He ran through the Cane River Children of Strangers with me. He really seemed to like it. I find that pages 4 and 5 will have to be altered, for when I wrote them, I hadn't discovered Marie Therese Coin-Coin, and so had her son, Augustin, build the buildings which she in reality must have erected. That will be easily contrived, and I shall try to do it so only those two pages will have to be re-written. The Jones part seems a little long to me but I guess I shall leave it, but immediately following them, I shall introduce a page or two about the Madam's advent and what a twist she gave things in the Cane River country. This will introduce both Marie Therese and the Madam in this article, which may be alright for the opening gun and as she will be introduced about page 13, the pages between 4 and 5 and 13 will not have to be re-done.

Carolyn's note came today. If you would care to make note of the agent she mentions, we might eventually consult with him when the omlette appears ready for bringing to the attention of someone like Harper's. None of this procedure is rigid and you will feel free to act in any way you please. I merely hand along the address for your convenience in case you should decide to use one.....

3334

4365

Tuesday, August 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Would you mind awfully if I dropped you another little note before folding up my beard.

At the outset, let me assure you it will contain nothing of the slightest importance, and so if time presses, you can toss this into the trash basket, and you will have missed nothing.

It's late and I am tired but somehow, after having finished a stack of mail, I feel like chatting a little more before stretching myself out and calling it a day.

Lucy Morgan's letter is nice and so is Rudolph's. Dora's is a concentration of trivia which you will recognize as just the type of thing she loves to spin out every once in a while.

Little did she suspect when she penned it how much the one word in the piece would set my memories flying all over the place, for Sevres, as you know, nestles between Madame de Pompadour's devastated loveliest property of the 18th century, Bellevue, and St. Cloud just on the other side.

Never again shall I read the biography of Mme. de Pompadour by Williams, and so shall never find out if I was right in liking it so much so many years ago. I suppose there was something in it about Bellevue, and how the chimneys failed to function properly when Louis XV and the Court came over from Versailles or Marly or Choisey or where ever for the house warming.

And I suppose I never again shall read Sir Walter Scott's

"The startled niades from their shades,

With broken urns withdrew,

Bewailing the deserted pride

And wreck of Sweet St. Cloud".

But I have the latter in a little book of Scott's poems here and eventually we shall read that one together, don't you think so.

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And last week did I regale you with endless talk about the First Piano Quartet that comes each Monday night over several National stations at 9:30 our time at night, - 10:30 or 11:30 your time, I suppose.

I listened last night, - Chopin, Wagner, Schubert, Debussy and so on, and the promise for next Monday seems to make me equally eager to listen.

And while the 40 fingers were so magnificiently doing Clair de Lune last night, I found myself wondering if Debussy did much letter writing that ever got published, and if any of his biographers ever had much to say about his activities while in the household of Tchaikovsky's "Beloved Friend", for, if memory serves, Debussy undertook putting music into the souls of some of Frau von Meck's grandchildren over a period of time while she and the children were sojourning in Western Europe.

It must be the "m" in the "Melrose and von Meck" that impells me to opine how wonderful that the first should have had two such remarkable women in its history and that the latter should have been so closely associated with two such remarkably gifted composers. Of course there is old Frau Cosima but somehow or other her romances never seemed to me half so remarkable as her counterpart from Moscow, for who in the world ever heard of anything so extraordinary as her devotion to little old Peter Illyovitch whom she never saw although they were forever living on the same property or within arms reach, so to speak.

After Hollywood gets through doing the Al Jolson life stories, they might undertake a might musical on the Tchaikovsky theme, and if the audiences back in my day used to think "outward Bound" and "Berkeley Square" were mystery stories, as I have heard them styled quite seriously by dumb theatre-goers, what in the world would they make out of the remarkable friendship that brought forth Tchaikovsky's 5th, - with the film indicating clearly enough that these warm friends never laid eyes on each other.

Well, there ought to be a law against so much talk, and there probably is, and so I shall start, at this late date, by respecting it. But it has been nice chatting with you regardless, and perhaps my Reading Machine may be coming through before long and if so, I shall be thinking these things and not worrying you save telepathetically.....

8364

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Marie Therese
Mettayer
reconstruction of
her life
(over)

Wednesday, August 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:
It is so terribly dry, I have been toasting water at Arenbourg for the children. And so I'm tired tonight, but it's the healthy kind of tiredness we don't mind, and definitely my ailment about which I have been complaining so endlessly of late has turned the corner. There is really something exhilarating, I find, in sensing that one can really get back into the harness again.

A scant mail today brought little other than the enclosure, and that is of no particular interest. It does strike me the lady is taking her time about running through the Diary but naturally nobody in this world would concentrate on such business as does little Miss Lee of Lyme. And, you'll admit, there is but one of those.

I saw J. H. at supper. He and Pat have been going over the pecan orchards, having trees felled where too close together, for a pecan tree will not produce if an adjoining one touches it. J. H. can fly all over the hemisphere and up and down the road for days on end and never manifest the slightest sign of tiredness, but let him spend a day in the field, slap on the plantation, and he concedes the point that he is exhausted, a fact he would no more admit following road-running than that he might jump over the moon.

He told me he had a card from Sister today. She wants to bring the children down for three days or so next week, what with Shreveport school registration starting on Labor Day. I'll be enchanted when Labor Day arrives, that's one thing to look forward to with keen anticipation.

Marie Therese Mettayer, - what do you think about using that name exclusively in anything we write about the lady. I have been thinking the matter over and have about concluded that name will best serve all purposes. We have been able to trace the lady in the records by the diminutive Coin-Coin in that spelling and the Baumgartner rendition. But since the text will be in English and since many a reader would assume the word, Coin-Coin might be pronounced as in English, and a majority of readers will know English only, the tendency before we know it will be to give the name a twist that will suggest the words of a Salvation Army gal, shaking a cup and

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screaming for donations. Therefore if no coinage is suggested, the name Marie Therese Metoyer will be the one affixed to her in the mind of the average reader and before we get through with her, she will be one of the names of which colored and white people like may well be proud and eventually she may emerge as the most remarkable negress in American history.

In trying to re-construct her life honestly and correctly, it has seemed to me the most important date we have for this purpose is not the 1758 emancipation but rather 1787, the year her last child was born. I think we might assume she could not have been more than from 45 to 50 in 1787. This would establish her birth around 1740.

She therefore must have been young when brought from Africa, making it the more remarkable that she should have remembered the architecture of her home and the details of construction. I suppose this might have been at the age of 15 or 16. Her service in the St. Denis family on this line of reason would have been of brief duration and her child born in slavery an event taking place within the year of her arrival in America. Do you reckon old St. Denis or perhaps one of the several younger St. Denis boys begot the child and that it was for this reason their mother emancipated her. Of one thing we can be quite certain, the manumission was not made for years of faithful service, - a reason so often given in the old days.

And what of the years between her emancipation, 1758 and the birth of her Metoyer twins in 1768. Had she spent that decade down this way developing her property and that development in itself recommended the lady to the consideration of Thomas Metoyer, a Frenchman living here under Spanish rule and perhaps not able to get capital enough to obtain grants on his own account.

We know, of course, of a 600 or 700 acres grant she held in the Old River section. That a young negress should have possessed a single acre seems utterly unique in colonial history. And yet this was but one grant, and her holdings must have been vast, what with all the properties passing to her children and being confirmed to them by the Federal Government.

That she was a remarkable character, these facts attest. How even more remarkable that such a youthful person in those days of savage beasts and vast forests should not only have acquired them but cleared and planted them is equally staggering. I never heard of a like tale in all the annals of colonization. And yet these seem to be the facts, logically deduced from the known facts and written record. Do you find any flaws and yet, finding none, can you still picture such a business. Surely all the negro papers and magazines in the country ought to be featuring Marie Therese Metoyer, - and, fortunately this fact hasn't dawned on Mrs. Coloman.....

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4369 *Souvenir Plate*

*Caution twenty
Book list (A.C.)*

Thursday, August 24th, 1950.

And so tonight you are dining with Agatha, for your grand letter, together with the Inventory and the Book List arrived in this morning's post, giving me a glimpse of your situation along about now. I hope everything is going along like silk and that you are learning lots of first hand impressions of how things turn beyond the blue.

Madam Rand dropped by this morning at 10:30 while the knipmayers were here, inviting me to the camp for lunch with four guests whom she brought up for the day. I declined but passed by around 3:30 to say howdy and have a couple of tall drinks with a fruit juice base. I seem so avid for liquids I swallow everything in sight that isn't a solid, feeling the better for the doing.

I am impressed by the fact that you, too, find 12 of the books in the Madam's group on your own shelves. I haven't had an opportunity to run through the arrangement you have laid out but I think the method you mentioned is splendid and the list will in no way be altered.

You will be forced to smile at the note from Dr. Miller. Isn't it odd that she should imagine I might readily run through an article to voice an opinion, since many a time in years gone by, she herself has been pressed into service to assist me in reading letters of secondary importance. I assume the article she refers to is not of her own contriving but rather one about writing that has appeared in a recent publication. What I am hoping to do is to find the thing recorded and so have a go at it through that medium. Amazing, it seems to me, how many routes there may be to arrive at a given terminus.

There were one or two other pieces from today's post that I may send along but they are of no particular interest, merely little leaflets to let you know the trend of the wind.

2000

4370

Perhaps I mentioned last night, perhaps not, that the General and his wife are scheduled to come this week end for Saturday and Sunday. Now this is going to dovetail with Wenk aspirations, I can't imagine, for one thing is certain Sister will not come if she thinks the General is here. J. A. told me at supper he hadn't advised Sister as yet regarding next week. Mrs. Rand told me that her daughter and her family plan to spend the coming week at the camp. As Frances Rand Jack's husband, Whitfield, is Adam Wenk's attorney for the divorce, Sister and Whitfield ought to find much business to discuss, but as Frances and Sister don't hit it off worth a cent, a fly might readily develop in that ointment.

I find myself getting impatient to see how Nina's end papers are going to turn out. Oddly enough, the thought of her handiwork, as between this paragraph and the above, impelled me to ask myself why nobody, so far as I know, has ever done one of those Souvenir Plates with a pictorial map on it. What do you think about such an idea. I am talking about those dishes which people are forever collecting from some historic town or another, usually embracing the principal buildings or landmarks in a manner vaguely recalling Toile de Jouy. I think a Souvenir Plate of the Cane River country would be gay, and ever so much more simplified than the usual Souvenir Plate type. We might call it the Plantation Plate or the Melrose Plate or the Cane River Plate and a heap of people I know would like one or a half dozen for himself and a flock of them for gifts. For a Plantation Plate, the design, -- I hope, -- for the end papers might be curled up around the corners and pressed into service. For a Cane River one, it might be night to have Melrose centering the plate, with the zig-zagging river cutting diagonally across the china from upper left (left) where the Joyous Coast would be identified by the house of Uncle Narcisse or Uncle Phanor, and the lower right of the circle decorated by a little avenue of live oaks at Magnolia. Eli Mahier would be just the person for fiddling with such an idea. Strange Dora never speaks of her, but perhaps I shall drop her a line through Dora regardless. The only drawback about Eli is that she is of the Moore persuasion, -- writing a book about a year after she has received a couple of letters from her correspondent, and for me that is killing to contact, -- so much withers and dies in between times.

There is some kind of a frolic going on at the honkey-tonk and I'm hoping against hope that Friend Brew may tear himself away from the gay lights long enough to pass this way and run through the inventory with me. I feel sure it is going to be just the right thing. -- Do hope your tonight's dinner has been so pleasant....

2000

4371

re: Melrose
date of ownership

Memorandum:

The political pot got up a little steam recently, the report reaching me today, but of it I will speak later, for while I think of it, I want to refer momentarily to the Scrapbook.

I think we ought to reproduce Lyle's first impression of Melrose, as printed in the Picayune, -- should you run across it in the Melrose volume recently forwarded, -- perhaps last week.

I have the printed article in an album, but the date does not accompany the clipping and I assume it may be in the volume you have. If so, I should think it might begin well down the article, either with an account of his progress along the river road, or even farther along when he remarks something about a turn in the road and here we are at our destination, Melrose, -- or some such.

If you do not chance to run across the article, I shall send the album later and we shall hope to determine the precise date at some future time.

So much for that.

As indicated in yesterday's Memo or perhaps an earlier one, the General was scheduled to spend the week end here. This morning a message came saying he couldn't make it. It seemed odd he should be coming the week end before the Labor Day holiday and when I remarked upon this, Celeste confided to me in the greatest secrecy that the reason for his coming was based on a desire to look over the situation at the college. It seems the Presidency of said institution has been served up to him on a silver platter by the politicians, and he apparently considered the possibility. But now that he has wired J. H. that he cannot get up this way this week end, one can but speculate if that means he has decided definitely against accepting the post, -- or, on the other hand, if he has decided, regardless of what he might find, he will accept. I believe an appointment has to be made this week, or at least one would suppose so, since the incumbent President departs on August 31st, and college opens right after Labor Day. I shall of course let you know when the affair seems concluded.

1584

4372

At 2 this afternoon, Friend Postell arrived. He has been coming in the morning to avoid Mis Enthusiasm, but as I assured him she had been instructed never to pass this way without telephoning me in advance, he felt quite secure. We ran over several historical items, and I list the ownership of Melrose at this point, from his data, so we may have a record for reference. Of course the original grantee is supposedly Marie Therese (Coin-Coin) Metoyer. The Federal Government confiremd

Louis Metoyer (who died in 1832)
Jean Baptiste Louis Metoyer (a son(succeeded.
Theophile Metoyer (apparently a son of J. B. Louis) Metoyer)
Hippolyte Hertzog
Jose Henry
John Hampton Henry.
Estate of J. H. Henry, bringin it up to date.

One thing to be noted concerning the above, and one thing to be speculated upon: - first, Louis (father) and J. B. Louis (son) usually were referred to by people and in documents simply as "Louis", making identities just as clear as mud;
and secondly, - we only know Melrose was built in 1833, - and since it required more than a year to prepare materials and construct a house of its type, wouldn't it be interesting to know if Louis, father, living at Yucca, was engaged in building the new house at the time of his death, the building completed by J. B. Louis, or, if Louis died and only afterward J. B. Louis undertook the new residence.

Engaged as we were in these reflections, we were interrupted by a knock on the door. It was Mrs. Holoman, of course. I was between her in front of me and Friend Postell behind me as I opened the door. She apologized for not telephoning, introduced a photographer and accepted my admonitions with careless grace. I told her I was in conference and could see her in an hour and a half. My object was twofold, for that would give me an opportunity to conclude the Postell business, --we had just entered on his intention to photograph all the old papers in the Court House, giving us the Coin-Coin data, and secondly, it would give the sun to get around to the back of Yucca where the photographer could take some pictures. And so that's the way the balance of the day turned out. I hope the photographs of Yucca in sunshine will turn out nicely. He also took the gallery full length, the Chapel and the door in my boudoir, showing the great keys on the door knop, the grandfather clock, the blunderbus over the door with accompanying powder horn and the Audubon print which I substituted on the wall where the Black Swan usually hangs, thinking we would be using her separately. I also had him take a photograph of the fan light window and a portion of the staircase in the Studio where little Miss A. is want to paint. So turned out the hottest day of the year and often I found myself hoping Manhattan was more moderate for your sake.....

1584

4373

Sunday, August 27th, 1950.
Memorandum:

Adn so let's begin with Saturday, which, thanks to the post, was grand, for it brought your grand letter with enclosures and another item, long awaited, the Reading Machine.

And so last night, what with a full moon flooding the White Garden, my back gallery was redolent with Tschaiikovski.

The records seems to function perfectly and I shall always be glad I had the self control to withhold trying it out until the hour had come which early June once and for all established as the perfect one for me beside St. Giggin's fountain.

But I need not expatiate on the setting which you know so well, nor need I mention the actual recording of the Overature with which you are equally familiar. You will understand perfectly, too, that I sensed a benediction of peace throughout the musicale, the superlative in contentment that comes only with the realization that the spirit of a kindred companion, those physically absent is in reality omni-present. It was as near perfection as it could have been and for the whole delightful evening I am solely indebted to no other person that little Miss Lee of Lyme.

I haven't seen a secretary today, to my regret, for I wanted to run through your letter again before responding, but I shall take up some points at a subsequent sitting instead.

I appreciate your cooperation in speaking of the abrupt ending of the Clemence article. I trust you will always advise me when anything seems out of joint in the text or in any way subject to remedy.

If memory serves, the final article I quoted regarding the Primitives, ended up with some such sentence as "It must be fun living on Cane River".

As this was being dictated to me, the thought struck me that it might not be a bad idea to terminate the article as quickly as possible after that remark, and so I merely jotted down the word Epilogue, and added: "It is, -- Thanks to people like Miss Annie and Clementine Hunter."

and just let the thing end thus. But your immediate reaction

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to this method is important, and it is possible, too, that had I phrased the sentence a little differently, it might have been more clear that following the somewhat ostentatious word, "pilogue, thereby suggesting something important was to be appended, I merely repeated the thought of the last sentence of the review, as a kind of confirmation by one living in the Cane River country.

Obviously something must be added to round out the article other than the final quote from the newspaper. If a paragraph or two seems to be needed, you might let me know. Frankly I am hoping Phil Johnson may bring his artist wife and son, the wood carver, around, and I can thus put in a couple more characters. If not, and the abrupt ending is retained, the sentence would bring the article to a conclusion in the minds of the reader more obviously if the sentence ran:

"It's true: - life is m fun on Cane River, and people like Miss Gammie and Clementine Hunter do much to make it so."

But while I think of it, let me mention here that if there should be a skip of a few days if correspondence, you will not be too cross with the postman, for it may be due to a whimsy on my part. My cold is definitely on the mend but as is natural after such a prolonged session, I seem to lack pep. The Rands have fussed at me so long about coming to stay with them for a few days that I might take this opportunity for a build up, should they invite me, thus accomplishing the social amenities while having some extra vitamins thrown at me. Naturally I shall avoid such an outing if possible, but should it eventually appear that a couple of days with them down yonder might put me back into better physical form, I shall surprise them one of these days by saying Yes. And if I should do so, the clerk will hold all incoming mail in a special box for me in the post office, so everything will be quite intact until my return. All this is set down not as a probability but merely, just in case I should seemingly neglect this machine for 2 or 3 days, acquaint you with the reason for the little skip.

You envisioned the possibility of a quiet weekend, and I hope it has been realized. As for the Melrose scrapbook recently reaching you, if storage space isn't too pressing, don't worry about hastening its return, this year or next is all the same. As regards reproducing M. and Mme. Narcisse, I guess on second thought, there isn't much point, since it might be difficult to jam the "Cane River Coast" into the volume we contemplate at present. What do you think.....

and just let the thing end there.

4375

4375

Monday, August 28th, 1950.

Memorandum: How grand to find your Thursday letter in today's post, together with the transcript about Primatives. I'm so glad you like the little skit, and I am hoping to be able to add two more characters, if they turn out to be as interesting as reports lead on to believe.

In your letter you mention the possible spelling of "ile" or "isle", and when friend Postell was here the other day we considered the matter from point of view of the records. He found the word spelled in both ways, suggesting the keeper of the ante bellum records must have had a mind like mind that seldom spells the same word twice alike, even when used in the same sentence. It's a curious thing that the Natchitoches records were still kept in the French language only, perhaps 50 years after Louisiana became American. Wouldn't it be interesting to know if the German settlements in Pennsylvania or Ohio or the Swedish or Norwegian counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin also retained their mother tongue for the official records for such an extended period, following their incorporation into Statehood.

Since the balance of the Baumgartner letter head is in English, I see no reason why all of it shouldn't be, but I don't propose to go into a symposium about retailing original spellings in American names of places, for if we suddenly converted Los Angeles into The Angels that would seem odd, and if we don't eventually convert some of the Indian names of communities into English equivalents, I shall never be able to write them for lack of knowing how to spell them.

I intended returning the picture of Clemence you so kindly sent along for my inspection. I think it good, and I especially like the arms and hands, but I reckon the one you have of her engaged in painting may tell more of a story for the scrapbook, don't you think.

It seems to me my cold is better although the high acidity tends to linger on. What with a flock of Rands, Knipmeyers and Worsleys to be encountered within the next couple of days, that, too, will be gone into, and I shall report accordingly.

My plans for an "all Tchaikovsky" program on

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the gallery last night went awry. Shortly before finishing my Memo to you, the electricity faded. I assumed it would be but momentary and went ahead with my plans. But I had the pleasure of sharing the beauties of the night with Grandpa and without any filling in by good old Peter Illyovitch, for it was after midnight before the current was restored and I had long since folded up my beard. It seems a limb from a big tree at Magnolia had crashed, breaking the high power line, and oddly enough there wasn't a breath of air stirring.

I intended asking you before if Albert Schweitzer is still living. I liked the Hagedorn book, "Prophet in the Wilderness", even though I found two pages 11 and 12 but no page 9 and 10. I am so glad Schweitzer, Zweig and Mollard knew each other, for life must have seemed ever so much more comprehensible with such kindred souls. I have thought about the importance of one individual knowing another and seemingly how rare that is. Whenever I read something about such a philosopher as Schweitzer and his theory that man must eventually think his way through, - I am a little startled at the number of people I know who don't seem to think much to begin with, and what they do concentrate on a pears to be, in spite of their contacts with the printed page and others who think, quite without anything beyond what stirs the brain of the beast. But fortunately all brains don't follow the same pattern or it would be a dull world, but sometimes it seems if a few more brains functioned or could function a little bit more along other than sheer mundane lines, the world might be a heap happier. This whole silly business of bankrupting ourselves financial merely to keep up with the Kremlin, and one positive way to avoid such vast expenditures, I should think, would be to hurry up and organize an international police force under the United Nations, stock-piling ammunitions in strategic spots all over the world and thus avoid having to pull and haul billions of worth of munitions and boys half way across the globe every time Uncle Joe twitches an eyebrow.

I know nothing of Schweitzer's theological theories but his religion, wrapped up in his phrase, "Reverence for Life" sounds alright post card from Sister, inadvertently thrown out with some advertising trash, says Nina has sold her Shreveport home, which means, I reckon, she will be heading out for Texas soon. Sister remarked she would be looking for a letter from me whenever I found time to write. That, if penned by almost anybody else, might suggest she had changed her plans about coming down this week, - the last available, for the children begin school on the 4th. But from that quarter such a remark might mean anything or nothing. On Saturday the naming of the new President of the college will be forth coming. I can't imagine the General accepting for the thing is bound to be political and he wouldn't be the type to listen to the hill-billies down Baton Rouge way. But of course there is always the chance his next younger brother might make the marionettes squak in the right keep, but all that seems too much. And now for Peter Illyovitch.....

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Monday, August 28th., 1950.

Memorandum:

This is some sort of a post script to the Memo I wrote just before having a round with Peter Illyovitch on the back gallery. It was all so wonderful and all so redolent of your kindness to me that I feel impelled to drop this little thank you note again, --it has all been so delightful.

And as I let my mind wonder about as the Overature was playing, it occurred to me there were two or three things in your next to the last letter which I wanted to respond to but haven't as yet.

Contrary to one remark about the picture of M. et Mme. Narcisse Prudhomme, I do think we ought to have it photographed some time when convenient, even though we shall not probably use it in the current opus. It would be nice for your record, too. It is perfectly alright to leave the book with the photographer.

And thanks for telling me of the Madam's notation regarding the Manhattan marriage to a chemist by one of the Prudhomme ladies. That is the first I had heard of that particular new item.

You ask regarding the necessity of getting permission to reproduce Government photographs. It is not. It seems that the Federal Government cannot copyright any of its material, since, I suppose, it goes on the theory that everything the Government does is accomplished with moneys paid in taxes by all the people. That is one reason why the Federal Guides could be published, - because the publishing rights were sold to a private or independent publisher, - a commercial one, I should say. I shall not argue the fineness of this point, but the fact is the material in Government pamphlets, photographs taken by Government agencies, and so, cannot be copyrighted, although I believe the request is made that the courtesy of acknowledgement be extended.

I am glad to say nothing has come through as yet from Dr. Miller for me to read. Whenever it does, I shall certainly be in no rush about getting to it. Perhaps she has had

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a second thought and has changed her mind about sending it, -
I hope.

You ask about the wisdom of making reference to Clemence receiving a pat on the shoulder from Rosenwald. It is a good idea, I think, and can be neatly inserted along about where we are talking of Lyle's appreciation of her work. I have not run through the transcript as yet, and so am not able to respond precisely to your inquiry about question marks. I had my secretary, Murrell, read me some of the material that appeared in the Natchitoches Enterprise which I had written for it some time back. Murrell is fairly free from being effected by punctuation marks, and it is quite probable she failed to mention them. But I shall check on the matter and make the proper notations when I return the same to you, and should I secure additional data for that section, - Primitives.

It is quite possible, too, that in my original manuscript, I was misleading in that Epilogue business, thus giving you the impression that the shortest Epilogue read: "It is fun thanks to Miss Cammie and Clementine Hunter", whereas I should have written:

"It is, --- thanks to Miss Cammie, etc. But on second thought, and I am naturally no authority on the printed word and the impression it creates, it probably would have been better to eliminate the word "Epilogue" entirely, and merely put in the sentence, hard on the heels of the quoted article from The Item.

I shall certainly be glad when this coming week end no longer confuses the local social calendar. By then the potential Wenks will have come and gone, and so will the Wilkersons, too, I suppose. If memory serves, they were contemplating spending a day here in August. I shall be just as happy if they put off that visit until later in the season, thus giving us an opportunity to get our own efforts further in shape, and at the same time avoid for themselves the chance of getting encumbered with the Wenks.

But the hour jogs along and I had better prepare to fold, at the same time giving you an opportunity to do something other than wading endlessly through all this talk. I'm going to read a page from Prescott's Conquest of Mexico, and then rest my eyes.....

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Tuesday, August 29th, 1950.
Memorandum:

The enclosure suggests we are to be honored on the morrow, since nobody showed up today.

When here last time, Sister asked me to have Clemence make a Gobelin similar to the one on my back gallery. She left \$10.00 for the job. I wonder how much time she thinks it takes to make a patter, cut out the same and piece together such an item. Naturally I haven't even brought up the matter to Clemence as yet and shall eventually return the \$10.00, saying it is "no-go". Do you take it from this letter that Nina plans to accompany the Wenks. It is heartening to know the sketches are nearing the finishing point. Nina will do a grand job, I am certain, and whatever we use of them ought to add a pleasant note to our current efforts.

Friend Postell came to visit me today, his final call, I suppose, since he plans to depart on Thursday. He reported one great disappointment to him and to us. His secretary was instructed to forward him his photostat machine which he hoped to use in recording all the documents in the Natchitoches Court House covering the colonial period copies of which were to be given us. Well, the secretary carried out instructions, but directed the shipment to Mississippi rather than Louisiana, and so we shall not have the photostats this year at least. Isn't that a pity.

Cotton harvest appears to be in full swing. Today about 100 extra pickers of all ages and descriptions were brought down from town to assist in the picking. Wagon and truck loads of the snowy lint converged on the gin all day, and what with an overcast sky, I reckon there must have been a bumper gathering that probably hasn't be headed for the gin as yet, and will probably not appear before tomorrow's dawn. I passed by the store with Friend Postell when the day pickers were just in from the fields. They exuded gaiety, and as they are paid each evening for that day's harvest, they were stuffing down cold cokes and Eskimo pies, their eyes rolling and their whole persons giggling with satisfaction and delight. Surely there is no happier time on the plantation than these first days of harvest before they get tired of the job and when they can fully gratify their all-summer longing for cold drinks and the like.

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In your letter, to hand yesterday, you express your awe and admiration for the staggering amount of labor on the Madam's part, as signified by the material she compiled for Natchitoches Lore, her scrapbooks, etc. When added to this her various other lines of endeavor, planting, weaving, correspondence, the raising of a family, unending entertainment of visitors and house guests, personal attention to various people of color, not to mention the humdrum of domestic management, and one is floored by the sheer bulk of the thing as it piles up before one.

And the strangest part of it all is the fact that with but one or two exceptions, among whom you I consider as one, the world will never know, --not even those in personal contact with her during her life, how gigantic was all this concentration of accomplishments. And you are one of the exceptions because you have the mental and cultural capacity to comprehend how much in energy and impulse was represented by a single volume of her compiled research, and being able to appreciate a single unit, you can readily multiply the same by 100 or by 1,000. But this understanding was within the grasp of but few others, and so the magnitude, for example, of her scrapbooks, registered in the minds of most people was merely an impressive pile of big books that, in their minds, implied no more labor that would the piling up of a few hundred Manhattan telephone books on the part of some subscriber.

Kane's concept of her in his chapter in Plantation Parade differs from actuality about as much as a Helen Hokinson cartoon of a mother and daughter differs from da Vinci's study of St. Anne and the Virgin.

The truth is, I suppose, that an actual portrait of the Madam, setting forth her real heroic accomplishments, would attract the interest of but few, be accepted by fewer as the truth and comprehended by a handful. I imagine a parallel might be drawn between her accomplishments and those, say, of Mme. Vigee-Lebrun. Lots of people, most of them without even knowing the identity of the portraitist, are acquainted with her portraits of Marie Antoinette or the self portrait with her daughter. Very few of these would even care to read a biography of the lady and perhaps not half a dozen people either of us know would be impressed by the magnitude of her 3,000 portraits and hundreds of landscapes. In fine, "truth is stranger than fiction" and fancy more readily believed.

But, Lord, how I do go on.

Must knock off a couple of letters and then gather up some sleep as an energy reserve against the racket of the morrow when, I suppose, old Shreveport will again honor us.....

Wednesday, August 30

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Memorandum:

What a day - and withal not bad, inspite of the inevitable hubbub and hurly burly.

I reckon it must be the unusual stimulant that seems to have pepped me up considerably.

However, that may be and for however long, it is pleasant to be able to report the end papers are here, together with the black and white sketches of the Chapel. They are quite nice, and thus another step is made forward in our current line of endeavor.

Whitfield Wack came by early this morning, inviting me to have lunch with them at the Rand camp. Blythe came up and I joined them about 1 o'clock. We had a pleasant sitting and on my return I found the Wenks had arrived, Sister and the 3 offspring, but Nina had not come with them, but had sent the drawings.

And as though this weren't enough excitement, the great calla-lily-like blossoms of the Elephant ears began unfolding. I am delighted they made it before Knipmayer Day, for the kindly doctor will be entranced when he discovers them on his arrival tomorrow. And above them some 10 or 12 feet, another big old Orinoco banana has begun unfolding its rich red leatherette petals, and that particular spectacle also enchants the physician.

Sister had a fit when she saw the Elephant Ears, for these blossoms are the first she had ever seen and she very graciously inquired as to why it was none ever blossomed in Nother's day but seemed to be bursting out in gobs at this late date.

I guess the enclosures aren't of any special interest, but I send them along regardless. I assume Robina has been so busy she hasn't had an opportunity to go into the Diary, but now with the promise of return to normalcy in her office, I suppose she will turn to that shortly, -- I hope. There certainly isn't any rush about it, I guess, and yet it is always nice to know I can give them back to your true hands.

But in view of all such doings you may readily imagine that the day, usually cluttered up with pilgrims and work-a-day sort of things, seems ever so much over-loaded as of the moment.

While I think of it, and perhaps this is important for the floral section of our Scrapbook, there may be a picture, - snapshot - of the Madam in the garden, in the Melrose scrapbook which reached you last Thursday. As I recall, there used to be one in that book - one of her working at the cannas with her clippers, I believe. In the event that you should find that or any other, wherein she is gardening, don't you think it would be a fine idea to have it reproduced to go along with little Miss Dormon's article and that of little Miss Lillian's.

I believe L.S.U. begins its Winter semester about the middle of September. I shall accordingly hold Nina's illustrations for a while, on the assumption the Wilkerson's may be passing this way. These might present some opportunity for discussion regarding technical details of printing, etc.,

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which might be of service to us in preparing the final manuscript for presentation to the publisher.

I believe the type of reproduction done by your local Kodak house will always be superior to anything of the type undertaken down this way. The 8 by 10 glossy prints here cost a dollar each, which I presume is fairly reasonable. But that is of secondary importance in view of the fine workmanship you will be able to secure, plus the fact that nobody in Manhattan would know or care what the films are, whereas anything done in this area--Alexandria -- would automatically become available to Misenthusiasm who seems to know all the photographers and apparently keeps an eye open for everything from this area. I can't imagine what she would do with them, but at the same time, I should never have dreamed she would have even mentioned the matter she did to the Negro Digest, and so it is undoubtedly better to keep as many from coming within her reach as possible.

By chance at luncheon today I mentioned Mary Daggett Lake to Mrs. Rand and said I thought some of Miss Cammie's letters to her were excellent. Blythe said she had a few written ^{to her}, rather short, and one of ~~them~~ ^{them} remarking upon the importance of preserving some old house or other. She responded affirmatively to my request for using it and said she would try to get it to me by Sunday, or during the middle of the coming week. If it is any good at all, I reckon we might use it, with the Gustine-Lake items ^{to} lend variety or at least to ~~give~~ ~~them~~ ~~some~~ ~~circumvent~~ the limitations of the letters she wrote to counterbalance those she liked to receive. I shall send it along as soon as it comes to hand.

No Peter Ilyovitch concert tonight, what with sleep coming down on me, to quote Peter Ilyovitch Baptiste. A couple of interruptions has probably made this letter pretty hodge-podge, but I hope you can make it out alright....

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Wednesday, August 30th, 1950.

While I think of it, and perhaps this is important for the floral section of our Scrapbook, there may be a picture, - snapshot, - of the Madam in the garden, in the Melrose scrapbook which ^{was} presented to you last Thursday. As I recall, there used to be on in that book, --one of her working at the cannas with her clippers, I believe. I ^{was} there the event, with about two, in the garden. I believe she was taking a picture, and I think it would be a fine idea to have it reproduced to go along with little Miss Dormon's article and that of little Miss Williams. The unusual stimulant, that seems to have perked me up considerably.

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re: Scrapbook

important
2nd page

Thursday, August 31st, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your elegant fat letter to hand in today's post, - your letter of Sunday, containing the snapshots, transcriptions of letters, and so on. I have read the letter, but have not had an opportunity to run through the letters. I attach a duplicate of a letter I mailed Mrs. Moore this morning. She apparently has scratched me off her list, but I wrote her regardless, feeling the Adam might have written her a particularly interesting letter at some time or other, - one that might reveal both the Adam's encouragement of Mrs. Moore's historical efforts and at the same time reveal her own interest in things ante bellum.

It now appears to me we have about all the letters to the Adam that we shall be able to use if we keep the section on her correspondence in balance with the other sections. Of course it will be more extensive by ~~xx~~ pages than such a section as the Cane River-Primitives, but even so, we shall soon find ourselves able to select and reject certain letters, perhaps, --now that we seem to have quite a variety to choose from.

I think I shall probably be able to get Caroline Dorman's consent to print the letters you mention. She is such a fussy bag it will take some labor on my part, for at first she will adamantly refuse. But I reckon I can wring it out of her eventually. You may recall she was so ridiculous as to refuse to let Lyle mention Briarwood in the Louisiana State Guide, a stupid action on her part, since naturally there were comparatively few places, as against the whole of Louisiana thus mentioned and it would have been so beneficial to her and the property as an historical record and even from a sheer financial viewpoint in years to come.

The Bachelier letter sounds grand, and I think we should use it, too, and by all means. I heartily approve of all the others, too, and I am quite sure Miss Nellie won't mind including hers. I haven't a doubt some of the Adam's correspondence with Adam Moore would be perfect, but what with the other items to hand, we won't have to break down and weep if she, - as she probably will, ignore my note of today to her.

You, frankly, are mistaken on one point: - to wit, that you have already mentioned too often how much you wish we might compare notes together and especially on the gallery under the auspices of the Adam. I think the desire for good things cannot be reiterated too often, for often by just such means are miracles realized. In short, let us both continue to hold the thought.

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And we have now reached a point where I think we must come to a definite understanding as to where the original foundations in the form of the manuscript in its original and most complete form is to be situated as it approaches maturity. If you don't mind, I should like to have all the illustrations and originals at your finger tips. Your own good judgement as to arrangement and final form are so identical with my own, that in itself is sufficient to make the decision, and secondly, since we want to submit the thing for consideration to Manhattan publishers first, it seems to me better that it should all be in your hands as much as possible. For in many instances, although we shall continue to build in duplicate as far as possible, there will be a lot of original stuff, such as Nina's illustrations, the end papers, and so on that will not be in duplicate, and therefore it seems to me better that they all be kept under your wing, if that will not inconvenience you too much, so that at any time as the work progresses and we feel it opportune to submit it to an agent or a publisher for recommendations, it may be done without having to await Uncle Sam's transmission of the stuff from here to there. I shall accordingly hold the McInness items, for instance, until I receive your approval of this suggestion, after which I shall send them along to you, together with any other material coming to hand, --and in case of pictures where there are no duplicates, I shall send these original's too.

Let's also consider one matter for fairly final consideration: - How many pictures can we use of Clemence can we use, - would you thing 2. If so, I should think one might be the one of her taken while painting, - the one coming back to me from you today. I think this definitely puts her in the readers mind as a painter. Perhaps the other, if we can use a second, might be of one of her paintings, and I suggest the one in the "Theodore Rousseau" manner, a copy of which I believe I can secure, either through the Worsley California friends, or by having it photographed here. The snapshot of Clemence painting is by Ramsey and I have no hopes at all of ever getting the negative on that, so I reckon we might as well have it photographed and enlarged forthwith. Naturally we both are undoubtedly hoping all the illustrations may be full page. This, sooner or later, is going to require a decision on the part of a prospective publisher, but until the thing has assumed a little further form or pattern, I think we might as well proceed on such an assumption.

Keep any or all material sent you as long as you please, and if space gets bulky and you want to return some of it temporarily or permanently, feel quite free to do so. I'm glad you liked the 1864 Dupree letters. We shall be able to fit them into the Banks Army career along Cane River, don't you think.

Two other points, and I'm done momentarily. You will find charm even in the latest "ing Solomon" letter and these, if they continue to come to hand during the succeeding 3 years, may be rather interesting in themselves, - a picture of the untutored plantation negro playing out a military career. And secondly, I seem ever so much better and getting back my old time vigor, sadly wanting during the past couple of weeks. Hope you are able to say you are alright, too.....

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Friday, September 1st, 1950.
I think it is going to be quite nice when Tuesday, which is bound to, actually rolls 'round.

Memorandum:

I think it is going to be quite nice when Tuesday, which is bound to, actually rolls 'round.

Too many interruptions, too much hubbub to accomplish much until then, I guess. Anyway, I don't seem to be bucking the tide much with all the week-enders about.

Dora seems to be feeling alright, as indicated by the enclosure. I have received four letters referring to the Montesquieu-Noailles article in Life. What with your mind and mine running as they do, it seemed so natural you should have spoken of the piece. But it comes as a surprise that Dora should have read it with interest, since he doesn't usually manifest much interest in such subjects. I laughed when her puzzled over St. Walter Scott's poem I had noted that makes St. Cloud and blew rhyme. I wish I had thought of that example at one of Dr. Butler's gatherings when the discussion came up as to pronouncing foreign words in the English manner. I recall that afternoon so well. It was devoted to Ibsen, and how we got around to talking about pronunciations, I don't remember. But I do recollect how Dr. Butler, who speaks French fluently, recommended that when speaking English, one ought to pronounce French words in the English fashion and not carry over the French pronunciation at all, and how he laughed, at the close of the discussion, when I invited him to join me later in town at any old "caf" for a cup of coffee.

Dr. Knipmeyer likes to read such articles and when this one appeared in Life, I set it aside for a go at it when a Thursday would offer an opportunity. But chance prevented us from reading it this week and last, so I shall hold the thought we may get to it next week.

Did you by any chance read the article Dr. Miller mentioned, - Shirtsleeve English, in the August Reader's Digest. Dr. Miller's copy arrived yesterday morning and I pressed Dr. Knipmeyer into service so I might give Dr. Miller my opinion of the thing forthwith.

I liked the article and subscribed to its premise readily enough, although I was a little surprised Dr. Miller found it so remarkable. The fact that I didn't may be due in part to the

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fact that I read that book, - "We Who Speak English" 6 months or a year ago, and the burden of the message in that book was along the same lines as the article. I'm not sure the message in the article was intended for everyone, - at least I hope it wasn't. For instance, it may be alright to tell an educated person not to worry about repeating the same words too often in the same sentence. But that statement was not intended, I hope, for high school and college nitwits, - not to mention most conversationalists, - who tend to wear out the reader or listener with the use of the same word about a dozen times in every sentence.

But I don't propose to give a symposium on the subject at this sitting, so you may relax. Still I do want to say it seems to me I am glad A. Lincoln at Gettysburg instead of saying "Four score and seven years ago", didn't bust out into too such a Shirtsleeve as to take a stab at the nearest adding machine, and start out, - "87 years ago....."

The fringes of the recent hurricane that swept over the Mobile area continues to scramble radio reception here. I did try to list to last night's Mutual program wherein some Ohio reporters were interviewing Senator Taft, but I didn't get much out of it. But the Reading Machine isn't effected by static, and so I had a little Russian music to start with, and then quite a bit of reading about Ghengis Kahn or however that Mongol gentleman spelled his name. I didn't know before that he was the grandpapa of Marco Polo's friend; old Kubla Kahn. The book was by Lande, or some such, and wasn't too wonderful, but I always find myself interested in the old Caravan routes, and I guess it was this fellow who set them to functioning better than they ever had before, --or since.

Tonight's choice is an 1844 novel by Benjamin Disraeli called Coningsby or some such, and seems to be mighty wordy, while the other thing available momentarily is "Woman With a Sword" by Hollister, or some such, being a Civil War business.

It was pleasant to get a little dampened this afternoon, when I spent a little time at Arenbourg to piddle around a bit in the magnolia department. There has been an overcast sky for several days, and from 2 to 3 inches of rain to the north and South of us, but only this afternoon did it get around to give us a slight shower. Every once in a while a plant seems to decide to start growing in September, which seems odd, and this year a pear is climbing skyward belatedly, after having stood still all summer. Your Fortuni looks as robust as can be, and has filled out and grown wonderfully during the past few weeks. Just for fun, I shall count the blossoms it brings forth next Spring. My guess is somewhere between 100 and 150, which is certainly moving in the right direction.....

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Sunday, September 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post.

Your letter with the Rachel Field enclosure, - yours of the 15th, came through safely. I suppose it must have arrived on the 19th or the 21st. For the life of me, I cannot imagine why I did not acknowledge its receipt. Perhaps my cold was at its peak at the time or perhaps, if it reached me on a Saturday, a dozen personalities trooped in between its reading on Saturday morning and my response, or rather my failure to respond, as of Sunday night.

In any event, I apologize for the anxiety my silence concerning it occasioned. I think it is such a splendid idea to check on these matters promptly, thus assuring each other that everything is being transmitted smoothly. I shall always remark upon it from this terminus, should a question arise, and I am always glad if you will do the same. In regard to the possibility of anything I send being lost, either on its way to you or on its way back, I beg you not to let it worry you. These transactions are entirely as between you and me and in case something or other comes up missing, we can compensate our losses with the realization that we couldn't have taken it to heaven with us any way.

But actually the item is question came to hand alright, and I am so glad to re-read your letter of the 15th. It was so much like having a session together undisturbed on the gallery which is the most stimulating experience for me. Then, too, the mention of your re-arrangements on the domestic scene makes me hope the photos you took came out at least a little to your liking, and even though they may not be clear at all, I should be enchanted to see a likeness of the general arrangement, for then I shall the better envision your situation when writing from there, just as you, in turn, have some idea of my vantage point whenever I take Underwood in hand to chat a bit with you.

With the week end half over, the weather must be conceded as having been remarkably favorable for me thus far. It has been in the cool-ish 70's with a rain on Friday night and a prolonged down-pour on Saturday night and well into Sunday. The Arenbourg children are bound to have benefited greatly, while I, on the same tack, have been able to concentrate more on matters of interest, what with few pilgrims braving the rain in the highway and the water in the gardens.

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Frances Rand Jack dropped in Saturday afternoon. She and her husband and gone to Alexandria Friday when the rains came, and she brought back a packet of letters her Mother sent for our consideration, --letters penned by the Madam to her, and she says we can use any old thing in them we want. I shall send them under separate cover on the morrow or next day. No one pays the slightest attention to Labor Day on the plantation, but perhaps Uncle Sam's postal messenger may not pick up 2nd class packages on Monday, so if the Rand letters are a day or two or three behind this note, you will not be worried by their dilatory progress.

In a Saturday conclave, the State politicians selected an Acting President for the local college, --some man for years associated with the institution, having some time or other in the past having held down the same post during an interim. I assume a permanent President will be selected sometime later, but it appears, as I had assumed, that the General will continue to demur the offer of the crown.

The Wenks pulled out after dinner today. For the most part, it was a quieter visit than usual but tinged, nevertheless, with a hubbub that would have made a similar racket on the part of any other visitors something to be remembered for generations.

Relative to nothing at all at dinner, --Sister and I dining alone, she suddenly inquired:

"Oh, have you heard from Mrs. F..... Did she have a nice trip."

"Ah, yes," was my casual response. "She said she really had a wonderful time..... and would you mind passing me the fried chicken.... Which way do you really like chicken prepared best....."

and so we were off on another tack, and never did come back to the starting point.

With August gone and no peep from the Wilkersons, do you reckon we have been spared the honor of a day's entertainment, --I hope. But of course college doesn't resume operations until about the middle, so I suppose there is a chance the W.'s may prolong their August rain check for another couple of weeks, --I hope not.

Miss Kate Perkins, too, was threatening to pass this way for a day to two before school opens, but as High Schools begin functioning on the morrow, I reckon she will scarcely make it. I should be ever so glad to see her, but I find recompense in the realization that if there aren't too many people about, I can thump this machine lots more steadily. and now for a little musicale, a page or two of reading, and so to bed...

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Monday, September 4th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Here it is still Lyle's birth day, even though I believe I dated yesterday's Memo the 4th, too.

But regardless of that your grand letter of Saturday, (8/26) together with the fat assortment of enclosures, came to hand in the morning's mail.

What a grand letter, everything about it, and a million thanks for everything in it and for the enclosures, the latter not having been run through.

If the Bachelier letter is still with you, you couldn't possibly make "bud" out of "bone" could you. That is the only word having to do with a form of grafting process I can think of, and that probably isn't it. It is used as a verb, as you know, when referring to the process of taking a bud from one type of fruit tree and set into the bark of another. But let us not worry about that point. Possibly he did use the word "bone".

And how nice of you to tell me all the news. The Offenback business with the "ontainebleu" scenes sounds wonderful. We could certainly stand lots of that type of "flim", as my secretary continues to style it. I appreciate your enumeration of some of the names, --for some characters I recognized, although I had almost forgotten them.

And I am enchanted to know that your evening with Agatha turned out so delightfully. The last time I saw her she was wearing a black tailored suit and she wasn't precisely stream lined, although I thought her figure substantial and pleasing.

And how nice that she was able to be with our mutual friend, and how good to have a first hand impression of a third party, for with that in mind, we may the better understand and sympathize with poor Anita. It is enough for her to have had such a difficult background in the past dozen years. And I suppose that added to this is the present circumstance of her health, trying at best at the moment, so that the sum total of both considerations are unusually trying. I shall be so glad to join with you in "holding the thought".

I am glad you mentioned the letter she sent me at Christmas time. I have it somewhere, so carefully set aside that I cannot put hand to it. I made an heroic effort to track it down the first week in June but to no avail. I know it is safe and that

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any moment I am likely to discover it, and when I do, I shall send it along as you suggest. It is high time I dropped her a note, - only I hope I can find the paper in question, so carefully preserved, before I actually take Underwood in hand.

Isn't it interesting to have news directly from beyond the Iron Curtain. Surely this seems to confirm all the horrors of what every report seems to state or imply. I suppose, as you suggest, it is the younger generation that is being concentrated upon by "Uncle Joe", and the fanaticism accordingly is likely to reach the same pitch it did under the Nazi's. Sometimes it would seem as though such a program would inevitably lead to the same conclusion, so far as peace is concerned. But of course there are many elements in the present stew that differ from the other, and may the present one be less potent.

I am floored to learn that you were able to discover a notation about the William's biography of "me, de Pompadour. And how pleasant is the thought we may turn through a couple of chapters jointly eventually on the terrace at Arenbourg. That is the pleasantest prospect I can contemplate.

And how splendidly thoughtful, as always, you are in being able to refer to the Landsford letter, in case I need it. I believe I have the original in my file, and I shall have to hunt it up on the morrow when I propose to do some work on both the Father and Son portrait and that of Grandpere, and, if memory serves, there was something about that artist in the same letter, too, - the one who did Grandpere. I shall consult my file tomorrow, and feel certain I shall be able to put my finger slap on it, but should it turn out to be suggestively elusive, as Anita's, then I shall consult you on a point or two. In the mean time, my blessings on you for having so thoughtfully reassured me.

For no good reason, I must have neglected to wind my clock at the accustomed hour last night with the result that the last two times I glanced at it, it pointed to 15 minutes before the

First Piano Quartet was scheduled to go on the air. Accordingly I leaped from this typewriter to the radio, as between this paragraph and the above, catching only the last two numbers, - The New World Symphony and that Perpetual Motion thing of J. Strauss. I am not sure that either composition is a favorite of mine but they were rendered so magnificently that I loved them regardless. Surely that program is one of the finest performances on the air and I only regret we can't tune them in several nights a week. And as I put my hand up to switch off the dial, I inadvertently siezed the station finding knob and bumped slap into Carmen Caballero who was doing a delicious interpretation of "Cheriberibin" followed by "Jealousy" on his piano, and it all was enchanting.

But I must close now for this sitting. My health seems getting back to normalcy, and how could it be otherwise, considering the marvelous tonic your letter brought me today.....

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I shall explore the matter of the Metoyer genealogy, although I have about come to the conclusion that in the end we may employ that with other data in a Cane River book, what with the Melrose data beginning to bulge in spots already.

With the weather delightfully cool, and comparative quiet aside from little matters to attend to for the colored folks in sorrow, I am hoping to be able to devote a little time to writing each day this week. At the moment I am mentally floundering around regarding the use of "Cane River's Children of Strangers", which seems to be a pretty good forward. I have marked it up a little, as indicated in an earlier communication, inserting a notations where the Madam is to make her bow and so forth. But in prying that place open for an insert, I realize, too, that when I wrote that article, I knew nothing about Marie Therese Metoyer, and therefore an opening would have to be made for her too.

These considerations have led me to the conclusion that I may be able to let the "Children of Strangers" article stand about as it is. This means that I ought to write a separate thing, - more or less biographical, about the two ladies. I haven't figured out exactly how this would fit in, if the article mentioned above is used in the beginning, but I'll figure that out alright. As I see the thing taking shape, it occurs to me that the original intention to put Yucca and the African House in first will have to be altered. Perhaps, after the Children of Strangers article, the book should open with the big house, - much pictures, etc., and all about the Madam, her various activities, etc., letters and all, and then, reversing the chronological table, put Yucca and the African House at the end of the book. Photographically, the photographs, numerically, of Yucca, will balance very neatly with the number of photographs of the big house, and so perhaps the thing will tip the scales nicely in such a arrangement, even though the story moves backward pictorially.

My thought is that probably the Editor will feel the average reader will be interested in the big house and its mistress first of all, and therefore the ante bellum building with its preponderance of data will demand first place.

On receipt of the enclosures from Misenthiasism, I tried to reach her by telephone but failed. I shall establish contact with her in the morning, forbidding her to use any photographs of portraits without my express consent. I shall use her photographer this coming Sunday for a couple of shots of the big house, - the Franklin stove and adjoining desk carrying the books the Madam read during her last year, the mantle piece in the dining room, contriving by some means to catch the white marble slab in the brick floor, - Melrose, 1832.

XXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX I am enchanted to know "Ravaged Grandpere came out so nicely. Isn't all this fun, even though it is hard work on

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Regarding omission of "Olive operation", - you did right.

Regarding Parrish letter referring to Peterson: - your handling of the matter is perfect, and the reconstructed sentence splendid.

Regarding any mention of Sister: - I agree wholly with you, - it is alright to let her name appear when it does so in an unimportant, or passing fashion.

Tuesday, September 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Forgive the rather curious way I have tossed the above notations into this letter. As I read your letter of Wednesday, last past, it seemed to me I might well make the notations as I proceeded so that I might be sure not to forget to mention any of them.

Every suggestion you make meets with my heartiest approval. And may I hasten to say how grateful I am to you for your nobility in handling these matters so adroitly. In regard to any reference to Sister, I reckon it would be a good idea if her name can appear at least once.

And may I rush on to tell you how much I am touched by your note of Thursday, coming to hand in the same post, - written on receipt of my note indicating I might skip to Alexandria for a day or two. Fortunately I seem to have ridden out that storm. I assume the influenza or whatever, while seemingly pretty evenly spread throughout my system, did tend to center a bit in the kidneys. At any rate, the urine seemed hot-hot and carried a cloudy appearance. I was forced to flatten out for several days which tended to correct everything, but I am taking a penicillin shot, - the Lord know how that is spelled, - just to be sure whatever lingers on of the cold is thereby thoroughly eradicated. My temperature seems to have disappeared almost completely, too, but just to dispose of the whole business, I shall take a shot or two regardless. In the mean time, I now seem back on my feet alright and have no doubt I shall continue to forge ahead from here onward.

And thanks, too, for fixing up the Parrish letter so skilfully. I shall write Georgetown tonight, asking permission to use the letter, and I have no doubt it will be readily granted.

Two or three unexpected "jam-ups" coming a out-mail time prevented me from sending the Rana letters. They will go forward shortly. Sam Peace's mother, - Aunt Maline, died this morning, and two or three unexpected requests for moral support had to take precedence over my normal routine.

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Scrapbook

Wednesday, September 6th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I shall not cover half I want to in this note, - for your elegant letter of Saturday, last past, brings up so many interesting points, I shall not recall all of them at a single sitting.

My thanks, billions of them, for all the most interesting observations you have to make on a whole flock of subjects. But before going into any of them individually, let me hasten to make this suggestions:

If you are not too greatly inconvenienced by keeping them to hand, wouldn't it be wise for you to keep all illustrations and anything we might possibly want photostated, together with all first copies of the manuscript, so that you may have them conveniently to hand when the work gets to the point where we can submit it to an agent or publisher for consideration, recommendations, etc. In cases where we shall want duplicate pictures, as Grandpere's ravaged self I should think it wise to have a couple enlargements made at a time, but if there seems to be one better than the other in such instances, you keep the better, so that the best foot may be put forward when the material comes up for consideration. I shall be hearing from you regarding permission to send the end paper sketch shortly, and if you don't mind having it along with the other plunger, it would be nice to know it is all together in your folio.

I am entranced with your fascinating account of the 1864 letters. I shall see someone on the morrow, - one of the Llorenzas, who will be able to tell me if Clement Llorenz was a mulatto, - thus seeming to determine the racial status of the writer of the letter. I was delighted over "fame" for "femme" and "Yan Key" for "Yankee". And as I read your reference to his herse, - spelled "eucher" or some such, I found myself wondering if this could be some of the same phonetic spelling of the writer's individual way of spelling "Yucca" which might have been given the horse for a name, because of origin.

I didn't know about the Dominique Matoyer photo of the picture in oi. A Dominique-owned Arenbourg at one time. Perhaps we ought to be particularly interested in him, - and where do you suppose that portrait is now and did you say it was dated 1836.

The portrait of Grandpere's wife, taken when leaning up against the bars at the window of my bedroom giving on the front gallery, has nice coloring but is pretty faded. - I meant to say, too, regarding getting the boy out of what I take to be a con-

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centration camp, that local mulattoes belonged to the Parish Guard, a quasi military-civil organization, set up in some Southern States, perhaps all, to safeguard the community, often functioning in both a judicial and executive capacity, with power of life and death in their hands. Miss Nellie's papa was one in Adams County, and perhaps Clement Lorenz was one along this bend of the river.

As regards the pictures sent by Rudolph, I agree with them that only the one of the Madam at the loom is of interest to us for the present purpose and I believe we should have a glossy print made of it. And that makes me confess I never did understand why all pictures for reproduction have to be glossy but so it seems to be.

Quilts
I agree with you that it would be a good idea to include the quilts in one form or another. They give emphasis to the domestic (feminine) into sts in a volume dealing quite a lot with less "needle and thread" business. Like you, I can't think how these could best be contrived for inclusion. I had hoped all pictures might be full page, but in this instance, perhaps a flock of them could be compressed on to a single sheet and be the more striking for their concentration and the pattern they might make by being joined. If, on the other hand, you think the photographs of one or two of them, if possible with the Madam appearing in them, are of sufficient artistic merit or domestic suggestion, then they, too, might be rated a whole page each. It is such details, of course, that will be helpful when we can find out if such illustrations are going to be alright so far as production cost of the book is concerned.

Perhaps the Henry Tyler letter should be included to suggest the range of the Madam's correspondence. It was for Henry Tyler that the Madam asked you to buy her an inexpensive edition of "Gone With The Wind." He died last year.

Yucca portrait
I was interrupted toward the bottom of the last page, and may have put in a line or two in the final paragraph having no relation to what went before. I intended saying that I had in mind using about 5 reproductions for the Yucca portrait group. The two children of Grandpere, -- the son (1) and the daughter (1) of whose identity I am not certain at the moment, and therefore without much comment regarding them. But with a paragraph, a page or more about the others, -- Grandpere, Father and Son, The Black Swan.

And about Clemence, don't you think it would be wise to use just two illustrations, -- one of her sitting down painting and one of her at her "exhibity". Or would you think a flock of pictures of her, -- I don't think so off-hand, -- as in the manner possible for the quilt arrangement. Am I right in thinking one excellent large illustration is more striking and more interesting than a flock of little ones giving more details. Caroline took the Clemence pictures, I believe, and we can't count on her films. Just select which ever you think better.

4396

Josephine Monette

Wednesday, September 6th, 1950.

Later.

Memorandum:

Of course I neglected to respond to your excellent suggestion regarding the inclusion of Josephine Monette in the Scrapbook.

I should imagine the picture you mention of her with some of her children would be splendid. As we shall mention the three phases of Yucca, -- colonial residence, slave hospital and restored residence, it might be nice to include two pictures of Yucca, -- one suggesting its colonial and contemporary appearance, and a second picture of it during its middle period, -- if you think the oil painting you have would suitably photograph for such a purpose. It was during its middle period, as you know, that Josephine raised her brood, -- 9 children in all, I believe, occupying that section of Yucca which is now my bath room. At the time she was living in that room, Uncle Israel and Aunt Jane were occupying what is now my boudoir. You mentioned a picture of Uncle Israel. If you think it would reproduce nicely, we might include it, too. And if the bell shows, I can tell the tale of how Aunt Cammie fed him with her own hand during his latter years and pinned up his jaw with her gold breast pin when he died, -- the whole Josephine - Israel business being grouped under Yucca in its middle period.

If I remember correctly, the earlier snapshot of Josephine which you have, is more or less a mother and child picture with nothing suggestive of plantation about it. I take it this one you just mentioned, -- the one with the 4 children, may be more plantation-ish. I leave it to your good judgement to decide.

In the matter of reproducing your oil of Yucca, I leave that to your good judgement also, for you can readily determine if it will look quite different when reduced to black and white, -- different, that is to say, from the photo we shall probably use of Yucca, taken from the opposite side of the house. Off hand, I should imagine the difference might be strikingly different and interesting, but there is no need of going to great trouble about including it, if you feel it wouldn't photograph very well.

I think it would be an excellent idea to quote from the newspaper obituary of Josephine. As I recall, the reporter apparently jotted down what I said to him over the telephone when I reported her death but since scrapbooks, among other things, are designed to carry clippings, a direct quotation might seem in order from the press.

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Wednesday, September 6th, 1950

I believe I am acquainted with the accounts of Melrose as were written by that youth for the Tensas Gazette or whatever. They didn't seem suitable to me. I shall get someone to dictate the section of the article Lyle wrote giving his first impression of Melrose and the Madam for the Picayune. This piece is pasted in an old Album and, unfortunately, does not carry the name of the paper or the date. I figure it must have been in the Spring of 1919. I think the Picayune has never been catalogued, but I may find some way to determine the date.

Secretary Brew tapped on my window between this line and the above, having seen my light on his way home from the honkey-tonk, I reckon. I had him dictate two pages of the three comprising the Saxon article on Melrose, so that with luck, I ought to be able to get the third page knocked off at the next sitting so the same may go forward in my next.

I want to thank you, too, for letting me know about the Sweitzer visit to Colorado of which I knew nothing, of course. I don't know why I am so delighted to know that he finally did make his American trip, even though it was ever so brief. I guess the reason for my satisfaction is based on the fact that I hoped in the United States he might find a manifestation of appreciation for all he has lived for, even as he appears to have found in Sweden. And what do you think of the man. From what little I know of him, I find myself refreshed in having run across another soul who is so big as to be concerned with humanity and not with nationality, which is always an inspiration. With so many people all wrapped up in what other people wear for outside garments, it is inspiring when one encounters a larger being devoted exclusively to deeper considerations, such as the heart and soul. I take it Albert Schweitzer is one of these.

Pat returned from the Rio Grande country tonight. He said his Mother and his new stepfather are to live in Houston, where Eugenia will teach school. His step father has been living in Venezuela during the past couple of years. From what he told Pat, the latter gathered Democracy hasn't really got to going full tilt down that way as yet. He understood the turn over of the Government down there a few months back and was due in large measure to oil companies operating there. He got the impression most citizens of that country felt more financially secure if they kept their reserves in banks outside the country. Naturally I was all ears but said nothing, but thought of you and of your own possible reflections on such matters.....

3889

4398

re: Baldwin letter
and proposition to
send articles to
Houston Post &
Southwest News

Thursday, September 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I hope you won't mind if later tonight I drop Helen a note in which, as a matter of courtesy to her, I shall give her your address.

I shall enclose her hilarious letter, packed with many points of substantial stuff. Perhaps you might read it at this point as it will afford you a understanding of the next point or two I have to make.....

Alright, ---now that you have read it, ---and I hope laughed as much as I did over her duck problem, let us consider her reference to The Houston Post.

I shall write her, advising that you have the manuscript of the Pilgrimage article which you will send directly to her. Her address is

Mrs. Frank Baldwin,
News - Tribune, Times * Herald,
Waco, Texas.

For I assume by the time this letter reaches you, the manuscript may have been returned by Coronet.

Pat tells me Houston has a population of about 750,000 and its Sunday edition, I assume, supplies both the urban and a large surrounding region, which perhaps accounts for its high payments for articles, although, like Helen, I can't imagine any newspaper handing out such large sums for articles. Still, it is possible they may pay well if they strive for particular slants on various subjects. In view of of their possible interest in dishing up material of probable interest to local residents who may travel over Louisiana way, ---and, strange to say, Houston people do have a camp here on Melrose, ---it might not be a bad idea to change the title of the article from Spring Pilgrimage, to "Southern Pilgrimage, - on the Receiving End"

I shall write Helen asking her, as a Texas resident, to consider this matter, and to substitute any other words or phrases that might seem to make the article seem a little more exclusively designed for Houston consumption.

8834

4399

It seems to me Helen, Carolyn, Lydia and I are eventually going to have many a friendly gathering all together, and it seems to me, quite aside from the business to hand, the present matter provides an excellent opportunity for a personal contact to be established. Again I repeat, -- I hope you don't mind.

I think you will be astonished, as was I, at the surprising bull's eye she hit in mentioning things which might be included in the manuscript. She has seen the Emma article, but that is all. When the material has developed a little further, we can communicate with Harper's or whoever, as a try. Off hand, I don't recall the Laughlin publishers of his "Ghosts Along the Mississippi". That item was certainly photographic alright. It is interesting that Carolyn recommended an agent and Helen does not. Frankly that is a subject I never felt settled about in my own mind.

In speaking of eventually running up to Marshall for a day, I made it on the proviso that I would give it more favorable consideration if and when Carolyn, -- I told her directly, -- ever found time to run through her films to find the one I want of the Madam sitting before the armoire bookshelves. We shall see if that is any good as a lever. I think Helen's point that Carolyn is about as elusive as a female Santa Claus hits the nail on the head. She is certainly a fine person but much too lacking in dependability to bother my head about.

Blythe came up this morning with a flock of guests. I lunched with them and returned here for a tour. It was pleasant but a little arduous, as I found one of the guests had a heap of negro information I wanted, and I pumped mightily and long. Nathalie Scott's sister in law was among the guests, -- the one who collected a couple of hundred thousand dollars when Natalie's brother accidentally shot himself or at least is supposed to have done so accidentally.

Precisely at supper time the Overdykes arrived, bearing me a fine Holland cheese that will go nicely with some delicious cakes the Knipmeyer brought me this morning. Dr. Overdyke promises to send me a complete inventory of Grandpere's effects, with the valuation of each item. I think he will do it, and if so, we may find in it precisely the proper Metoyer touch for material relative to the Yucca section of our Scrapbook.

It has been a full day. It will be rather late before I have folded up the Underwood and called it a day. But it is pleasant to think that it has held some things that may be of mutual interest to us both. And it is ever so pleasant to contemplate a little musicale before actually folding up.....

1044

4400

*Dupre' letters
Albert Llorenz's
funeral in
iron casket*

Friday, September 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:
The postman ring twice this morning, bringing me your two letters of Sunday, with enclosures, together with several other pieces of first class mail.

My secretary arrived tonight at ten minutes before 8. We ran through your two letters, coming to a full stop before taking up the enclosures and the other mail.

Sa Majeste, avec Mme. de Montespan, etait arrive a huit heures pour rester ici, --chez moi, jusqu'a dix heures.

All in all, the day has been rather hurly-burly, with a brief sitting with Celeste and Madam Regard before they took off for a frolic in South Louisiana scheduled to last until Monday. And then there were pilgrims and one or two people to contact on little genealogical points I wanted to clear up, and so the day played out. I am so anxious to get into your translations and transcriptions of the A. S. Dupre letters. Unquestionably they are from the pen of a mulatto, and I shall pin down the racial thing shortly. All the persons named in the letters whom I know about are mulattoes, too. I think your conclusions regarding the identical nature of one named in the Dupre letter, to appear 80 years later in the Baumgartner letter is fascinating, and again I must congratulate you on your keenness of perception in figuring it out.

After doing some work at Arenbourg, I walked over for a little chat with our neighbor, Alfred Llorenz, who lives, as you know, just to the North of Arenbourg. He says Clement Llorenz was some kin of his, a great uncle, as he recalls. He says Clement's family sometime after the war moved to North Louisiana, and he doesn't remember about Clement's death, but remembers the funeral of his son, Albert Llorenz, whose body was brought back to Ile Brevelle for burial in St. Augustin's grave yard. Albert's funeral left a profound impression on our neighbor because of the difficulty the family had in effecting interment. It seems Albert's body had been

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shipped here not only in an iron coffin but the latter encased in an iron box to boot. The iron within iron, naturally totalled a weight that was almost unmanageable for there was no available machinery to hoist the burden, and it was almost impossible for enough men to get within reach of the thing so that all could lay hold on it at the same time. By taking down a portion of the cemetery fence and backing the truck into the graveyard at a point not too far from the prepared grave, the huge metal mass was somehow pushed down a wooden ramp especially constructed from the end of the truck to the grave, and thus was burial eventually effected. So much for the end of Albert, son of Clement, and while it has nothing to do with the 1864 letter, I pass it along regardless, thinking you would find it interesting, as do I.

With research and conversations with people knowing something of the doings in Civil War times, I try to re-capture custom and practice obtaining at the time to account for the presence of A. S. Dupre and his associates in the Alexandria area. No one seems to have heard of planters being impressed or is it impressed into labor gangs, and yet off hand the letter seems to suggest such was the situation in his own case. The "Yan Keys" marched along the River in the Spring and as these letters date from September, one might assume the summer had been spent at enforced labor. That this one or that were employed on a boat would suggest they were also working under Federal supervision, either in transporting supplies from down the river, possibly New Orleans, or perhaps engaged in working on making a channel cut to the North of Alexandria where the rapids which give the parish of Rapides its name, tended to discourage shipping at such times of the year as the river was touching a seasonal low. July, August and September were usually the months when the Red River reached its lowest ebb before the autumnal rains provided sufficient draft for the larger vessels to carry away to cotton. I shall be glad when on the morrow I can run through these letters again and keep an eye open for some tell tale word or phrase that may throw some light on the matter.

and thanks no end for giving me the splendid quotations covering Clement. "Painting by heart" is such a lovely and original phrase, we certainly must get it in somehow. I haven't had an opportunity to run through the Rosenwald correspondence covering the same subject, but shall during the next day or so.

Some small proof prints of photos taken a couple of weeks back came to hand today without comment. They are all unsatisfactory, and so I shall try again on Sunday, hoping against hope that Helen may come before too long and take some really good ones for us. And now I must n fold for the moment.

0044

4402

"Woman with a Sword"

*pictures taken
for Scrapbook
(over)*

Sunday, September 10th, 1950.

This Memo isn't going to be any good, and you will miss nothing if you toss it into the trash slap off.

Physically I am feeling fine, but the week end has been so busy with matters of no consequence that I am already wood gathering before beginning our little chat.

Yesterday was sufficiently long in itself, not so much at the end as the beginning. At 3:45 someone tapped on my door, -- Sa "ajeste. It seems like de "ontespan had left her porte-monnaie on my sofa the night before and car keys were needed. Sa "ajeste was gayly ruffled. So was I but my merriment got the better of me, and although I tried folding up my beard after his departure, I couldn't sleep and so decided to be-sitr myself regardless.

This morning I had pilgrims and all afternoon that scatter-brained Holloman woman and a photographer. I think I got a few pictures for our Scrapbook, --but of such things, one never knows, of course, until the proofs appear.

By going to bed early Saturday night, I did get some reading done, finishing that Civil "war thing, --"Woman with a Sword" which blandly makes that struggle's successful conclusion hinge exclusively on the doings of one little lady, called Miss Carroll of Maryland. In the end the hero doesn't get the heroine, which may account for the movies not having done the thing as yet, although in the past movie magnates have been none to alter the last page of one story to please their patrons, so perhaps that isn't the reason for the "Sword" ady not flickering on the films. Then, too, it may be that after "Gone With the Wind" the movie makers are in a mind to put on another costume picture this soon, for costume pictures have vogue, as I understand it, and only appear every so often when everybody then makes nothing else but.

Next I am having a go at a thing called "Great Teachers", and from the names rattled off in the Table of Contents, I don't seem to have heard of half of them, even though the first two are familiar, -- John Stuart Mills' papa and little Miss Sullivan who made life worth living for Helen Keller. Of the dozens of teacher I had to weather from childhood to maturity in a whole variety of institutions I can think of but one or two who were any good so far as beating something into my head was concerned, and I guess if I ever did learn anything at all, it was more in spite of so-called teachers than because of them.

5044

4403

I wonder if you chanced to hear the U.S. S. program tonight,--
"Edward, My Son" with Charles Laughton and la belle Russel. Like
anything George Arliss touched; so anything Mr. Laughton interprets
delights me. I hadn't heard until announced on the program
that C. Laughton is going on or resuming a tour which, I gather,
is a one-man show, perhaps in dialogues not unlike the one-man sing-
ing show of Chevalier which you saw a year or so back. I believe
the announcer said it is called: "An Evening With Laughton", -
and naturally I thought of you and felt sure you would relish
an evening with Laughton, should he make his bow in Manhattan.

Returning momentarily to today's photographic business,
I want to let you know what items we struck:

The Franklin Stove in the Madam's room

The fireplace in the Winter dining room taking in, I hope,
the marble slab, - "Melrose 1833".

The Lafayette Apron

In the African House, Log standing before the portrait of Emma

The Yucca sundial

The Bidet, showing its 3 parts, standing before the Louisiana map

The Robert McAlpin cotton stencil.

If the photographic work on the latter comes out well, I
think the latter composition ought to be quite interesting.
I pasted white paper on the back of the copper stencil, thus
bringing out the cut out lettering in strong relief. I placed
the stencil itself in a horizontal position, resting on a white
cabinet against the paneling in the living room here at Yucca.
I gathered some cotton bolls, some open, some closed, leaving them
on the stems, and these I placed to the left of the stencil and
above it, while to the right I stood the doll, representing a colored
preacher. The Robert McAlpin-Simon Legree stencil with a figurine
suggesting Uncle Tom, plus the cotton bolls to remind one of the use
for which the stencil was contrived, --all seems to me more or less
harmonious as to subject matter, and, I hope, will embrace something
more as a picture than the mere reproduction of the flat metallic
piece of ante bellum plantation gear.

I have thought of you so frequently this week end, hoping
you weren't too jammed up with people and outside goings-on,
and that you got a little measure of relaxation all for you....

5044

4404 re: Contents of
Melrose Scrapbook
No 123

Monday, September 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

As there was no first class mail on Saturday, today's
cup was brimming, and best of all, your letters of Tuesday and
Wednesday, both safe to hand.

I have had two successive sittings with two successive
secretaries, "for it never rains but it pours", and I should have
been just as happy to have but one secretary to read your two
letters, but since things shaped up differently, I ran through
several other items as well, and left the balance for another
day, although those from a single source would have been sufficient

And so I shall plunge into whatever comes to mind as
mentioned in your two letters, as soon as I express my appreciation
to you for acquainting me so meticulously about the contents of
the scrapbook contents.

First off, Mary Bell McKeller, daughter of a former Mayor
of Shreveport, is dead, so we don't have to get her permission
to use anything she wrote, and I guess the Picayune copyright
must be run out by now. I shall ask about that. But don't
you think her article sounds good, perhaps following a page or
two after that of Lyle's first impression of the place, as
forwarded to you about last Thursday. Or would the other article
you mentioned by some man whose name eludes me be better for
giving a somewhat detailed report of the place, as the logical
follow up of Lyle's article.

Lyle's article which I had dictated to me didn't sound exactly
as I remember it, but it still seems to me to be good for giving
an impression of the place and the activity of the Madam.

And while I think of it, the sketch of Madame Rubin Roque
that seems to be signed "I. S." was not, as you naturally
assumed, by little Miss Irma S. Willard, but rather by the pen of
none other than Lyle himself, --at least that is what the
Madam told me.

My only reason for assuming there was a picture of the
Madam cutting cannas in the scrapbook was due to a statement by
Sister last week who offered to go to the back gallery and
produce it for me from said volume, but I got her off that track
easily enough. She probably had the picture confused with some
other.

1011

4405

Pictures for
Scrapbook

I have noted your request to hold up shipment of stuff for a while until half of South America gets put. I haven't much to send at the moment and shall be glad of the interim when I can add the new pictures which have just been taken and which can be sent along in the same batch. There will be two pictures which Marion Post took for the Department of Agriculture which I shall also send at the same time I send Nina's sketch of the Chapel interior. These photographs, taken in 1940, are of the wash house, fortunately with clothes on the line, and a wonderful portrait of Joe Roque, Celine's husband, the latter to be used as an example of a splendid mulatto type. These pictures, quite the contrary to our usual problem, are rather over sized than under, and will require reducing. But we can insert them with our illustrations, if you think best, awaiting decisions by the publisher. Under sized pictures too often fail to convey proper impressions, I think, while oversized ones will balance the scales in the opposite direction, I hope. These two photographs, - glossy, are perhaps 18 inches by 24 inches, or some such and are really remarkably fine.

I pause momentarily to glance at my clock and detest mine if it is running, for I don't want to cheat myself on the First Piano Quartet the way I did last week, --but I still have ample time.

That Harold Case number and the bag you mentioned describing Lyle, plus his 180 pounds are both sights. And the history of Yucca as revealed by Mr. Case reflects just about what one might expect, for you know Lyle lived and died and most of the living Henrys still exist, even as did the Madam until I had done some research on my own hook, --to wit, that they were satisfied to let Yucca drift along as a former slave hospital, none of them ever pushing back the pages of history to determine that originally it was the colonial residence before it was a slave hospital. It is true, of course, that once or twice, perhaps in the Revolution and perhaps in 1870, Versailles was a veteran's hospital, but wouldn't it seem odd if the world were content to palm the place off as a former hospital, and just let it go at that.

I guess I had better get Helen to "strike" a picture of the famous table cloth when she comes, for that seems to have figured in so many things written about the place that an illustration might be in order.

I'm alright and thank you for your recommendations regarding an outing. I shall take the suggestion under advisement, which means eventually of course. More on the morrow and may you, too, be able to tune in on the quartet without too many discordant notes flying about.....

1011

4406

Tuesday, September 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A second time this week, the postman rang twice, and thanks billions for your grand letters of Wednesday and Thursday last past, the air mail and the regular one arriving at the same time.

I sincerely appreciate your kindness in sharing the details concerning the mental problem with me. On the basis of the wife's letter, and, if needed, an additional deposition from the sister, I should think, ought to make veteran aid readily available. Without knowing anything about Government red tape, my guess is that application should be instituted by the wife to the veteran organization nearest Illion. Vaguely it seems to me there is a veteran's hospital in the Elmira area, and perhaps that institution could be made use of in the present case, so that comparative proximity of the family could be effected, for visiting, etc., although I believe during the early period of mental treatment, visiting by members of the family is discouraged. I suppose Illion is 75 or 100 miles South, or rather North of Elmira which would make it comparatively easy, I suppose, for the wife to establish contact with that place. It would seem to me circumstances are now shaping up so that something positive may be undertaken, and for everyone's sake, and particularly W. himself, his sister and wife, may shortly experience the relief from worry that should go along with a successful effort to get everything headed down the right furrow on the way back to restore health and happiness. I shall continue to hold the thought and shall be genuinely interested to learn how things turn.

And thanks billions for all details regarding the Ebony business. Off hand, I should love to know if Ebony and Negro Digest are publications honestly devoted to the welfare of and improvement of racial relations, as some negro newspapers must be, although some do exist, I am told, in one case of which I have been told, where the negro part is merely a facade set up by and behind which certain "Merchants of Venice" operate with a view of fishing profitably in racial waters they wilfully muddy for greater circulation and higher accompanying advertising rates. But that is merely an idle wish that one dreams of but never realizes.

I think your suggestion fine regarding the possible use of the Rosenwald prospectus as the basis of an article. I think I could get Dr. Knipmeyer to read the thing to me some Thursday morning and, as a result, I might by some miracle do some patching into the thing to bring it up to publication standards. There is but one fly in this ointment, --the fact that Mrs. Holoman

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had in mind to do some kind of a Cane River thing for the publication, and it was regarding that that she wrote that letter in which she bounced me forth in such an extraordinary fashion.

Either accompanying this letter or shortly, I shall pen a rough draft for your inspection, addressed to the individual who signed the Holoman letter, --I suppose I sent a copy of that communication to you. I shall state a couple of things quite frankly, assure the publisher of no wish on my part to infringe on Mrs. Holoman's province, but setting forth the circumstances surrounding her flyer into the Cane River country and my own acquaintance with the same.

I think the portrait in which I appear with Grandpere might be used readily enough, the one in which I am standing along side. They have seen a reproduction of this, I am sure, as it appeared in the "Miss Cammie Still Lives At Melrose" article which she sent them.

It occurs to me, too, that if the Houston Post might be interested in "Cane River's Children of Strangers", too, and if not, it might be submitted to the Ebony-Digest outfit for consideration.

I shall await the advent of the copy of Ebony you mentioned as being on the way. As you so neatly pointed out, that paragraph you quoted certainly bounces slap into my boudoir. But who in the world could have contrived such a thing. I can't believe Mrs. Holoman would do so, but one never knows. And while I think of it, she has already written Negro Digest, asking they give her the pen name, "Agnes Richards" for anything they publish by her. She went to great length to explain she occupies a prominent social position and was forced to keep her identity regarding racial matters secret. I know of no exalted social position she occupies and I, for one, don't have to conceal my interest in racial relations.

If the Digest-Ebony business should turn out satisfactory, there might be an article written about the annual pilgrimages made by people of color to Melrose. I should imagine such an article might be of unusual interest to readers of the Digest, and would probably end up, if published, by no end of visitors of color, since, so far, there are no historic plantations other than Melrose, privately owned and operated, that permit people of color to make tours. I might drop that hint in my letter to the Digest when I write.

You mention the Rand letters as not having arrived as yet. I haven't forwarded them up to now, but so all so shortly. I withheld them momentarily, thinking the gang-up of South America might give you enough to worry about momentarily. The sketches Nina made can go forward any time, together with a flock of photographs, but I shall await your nod before putting them in the mail.

Celeste and Madam Regard a e back from their round of parties in South Louisiana, "bien tickle over the frolic and busy as bees" at preparing parties locally for the balance of this week. "The fields are white for the harvest" and the female Nereides fiddle madly.....

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Wednesday, September 13th, '50.

Memorandum:
To hand your grand letter, together with the enclosures from the Memorandum. (Jan. 13, 1945 - Celine's birthday)
It is good to know how things are shaping up in your neighborhood, even though the presence of house guests in the offing, plus the inevitable stepping up of the business whirlwind eradicates busy-busy days ahead.

May the week end, as half anticipated, turn out to be comparatively restful, and almost any change, following the days prior to the opening of school, etc., will seem novel and new, I reckon.

I concur with you 100 per cent regarding the handling of the matter currently confronting the girl friend. It seems as though a golden opportunity was muffed. Surely some kind of settlement of the impending problem should be undertaken without delay, and it does seem as though joint action on the part of sister and wife might be the most effective. In all this hurly-burly, I hope you grab off every moment of relaxation you can, if, indeed, any at all are within your grasp. I shall understand perfectly if vast silences develop from Manhattan, and I pray you not to undertake correspondence until things get a little more ship-shape once more.

Under separate cover I am sending what came from Robina today. From what she writes, I gather you and she concur in what should have been taken out of the Diary. You will use your own judgement in accepting all or in part as to her suggestions, regarding the elimination of any words or phrases. You and I agree, for example, that in the case of the names of the singers, all should be left in. I don't know how I never chanced to mention to Robina that you were copying the Diary, perhaps because I avoided ever mentioning the Diary to her until comparatively recently, and when I did so, merely said that I was thinking of including it in the Scrapbook. It seems odd it doesn't seem to have occurred to her that having the item in her possession for editing, it afforded an excellent opportunity to doing some of the transcription

re: Diary

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she has several times kindly offered to do. I reckon her recent spurt in turning out greater volumes of day-to-day business items eliminated consideration or thought of less subtle chores.

And with Robina's material, I am enclosing a letter from Mrs. Moore, together with a couple of letters from the Madam to her. I haven't had an opportunity to read the Madam's letters, but assume from their length, they aren't much. I shall write Mrs. Moore tonight, asking her to run through some of the other letters she has to see if she can stumble over some reference to the history of Natchez or some of its old houses or families or some such, recommending that she eliminate any references that would not seem to lend themselves to print. I think we ought to include one of the Madam's letters to Mrs. Moore, even though it be of scant interest, for Mrs. Moore will take great pride in being represented in the collection, and as Town Crier for the volume as a result, will be of considerable effect on keeping interest bright in the book, once it is published, so far as popular demand may be created in any section of Mississippi where Mrs. Moore chances to find herself.

And mya I congratulate you on your suggestion regarding Melrose Vignettes.

OK
9/23/50
I should think these might be selected from any old time, covering any period that holds anything of interest and suitable for giving glimpses of plantation life. Perhaps the one about the Church Fair, --was that 1941, -- sent you a few weeks back, might be edited a bit and pressed into service, for I think few people have much concept of doings by the country Catholic Church as manifested by carryings-on by the nuns, etc., at this bend of Cane River, and such details might interest some readers.

Today's post was so heavy, I didn't get an opportunity to run through the two sample Vignettes you attached to your letter, but I shall be able to do so on the morrow, and shall report further on the same.

I think we have ample time to search for these in comparative leisure and to edit them properly, for in submitting the book for suggestions to an Editor, we can easily include a couple of sample Vignettes, with a notation that so many additional pages in the same vein will be included in the final manuscript, don't you think so?

Much more to refer to, but I had better fold this up for now, and "continue-on" at tomorrow's sitting. Do, please, take things as easily as possible, reserving every moment you can for your own rest and conservation of good health, and the more vast the silence of the post becomes, the better I shall approve.....

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Thursday, September 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:
Under ordinary circumstances, you should receive at least two letters in this post, the Diary and possibly the Rand letters.

The postman somehow got ahead of schedule this morning and had made his rounds an hour in advance. Net result, --no out-going mail.

Of the enclosures, you will find the Anne Parrish one hilarious. Off those going into our file, I guess hers and Helen's take the cake.

Regarding the two letter of the Madam to Mrs. Moore, there is no rush about transcribing them, --if, indeed, they should turn out to be worth transcribing. When they are finished, however, I think it might not be a bad idea to return them to her, for her friend, Amanda Phipps had such a long wait for her photographs, I should like to make a gesture of promptness in the present instance.

But there is no rush about any of this, but I mention the matter so, if convenient to you, they might be returned to me in a regular course of correspondence, attached to your letter, and I shall send them off to her accordingly.

In referring to the Parrish letter, I might remark that she did not return the duplicate transcript of her letter which I had forwarded for her approval or disapproval, but as we have the original, the duplicate will not be missed.

I also intended saying in the letter accompanying Mrs. Brandon's letter, that if you want to paste the Brandon note regarding the relationship of the Ailes and the Carroll families in your copy of a "Woman With A Sword", --and I don't know if you have a copy, -- please feel quite free to do so.

The copy of Ebony came safely to hand in today's early post, and what with it being Knipmeyer day, I was lucky enough to get several items read, including the one you so thoughtfully called my attention to. I cannot imagine how this reference got into the article. Perhaps it was based on "Friends of Joe Gilmore" information, although as I have never read that book in its entirety, I wouldn't know if much is said in there about the portraits. It occurred to me, after starting a letter to the publishers of

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Ebony and The Negro Digest that it might be just as well to look over the Rosenwald prospectus with a view to whipping it into shape before communicating with the magazines. Then, should they turn on the Green Light, we shall have something which can be submitted promptly, - which seems to me desirable, since too long a time lag in making response wouldn't be so good. I shall eventually speak of this matter, including the original letter to the publishers, before long. I think we might plantation stationary for the original communication but should any favorable business ensue, we might handle it through your good offices, - assuming half of South America may have departed prior to that time.

I read a page or two last night before folding up, --from "Great Teachers, arranged by Peterson. In it I found quite a few familiar names, and many quite unknown. Dr. Agassiz, or however the name was spelled, has quite a space. It was to him that B. L. C. Wailes was exchanging data in the 1850's, following the Wailes publication of his Geographical History of Mississippi or whatever it was called. The article or chapter shortly before this one about the Harvard scientist had to do with some Columbia teachers of note, and my beard grew longer as I somehow merged the two periods together, recalling how B. L. C. had had much to say about Dr. A. in his Diary and how I have in the past touched on some of my ancient acquaintances in the philosophical field, - Edmonds, Montagu, and so on.

Oh, yes, and I ran through the Malrose Vignettes you were so nice as to transcribe. "I scarcely recognized my own child", but feel that they could be rigged up just a little and included in the Scrapbook if you feel that they might give a plantation-ish touch to the piece. I shall, when other mail isn't too heavy, ask my Secretary to run through them with me, pencil in hand, and by doing a couple of little things, such, for example, as changing a word here and there where the same one has been used the one slap on the heels of the other, and so on. As you know, an interruption or some such, often breaks into my sentences, and when I return, I don't recall just what word I have just used immediately before, -- hence the unending repetition that too frequently appears.

If you weren't resting your eyes on Monday night at the close of the First Piano Quartet program, you heard them announce that beginnin this Friday, the program will go on the air every Friday night at 11:30, your time, until further notice.

The weather hereabouts continues favorable for cotton picking, and what with plantation people and folks from town all strumming on cotton stalks like angels playing harps, the cotton continues to roll

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on a "Cane River Bk"

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Friday, September 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:

What an unexpected plaisir to have the postman hand me a Manhattan letter this morning. Yours of Monday came safely to hand, and the surprise element was due to my failure to anticipate a two way conversation during such busy times in your immediate neighborhood.

In the same post came five photographs from the Alexandria photographer. I shall send these along shortly. They are of Yucca, the Yucca Gallery, the boudoir door with the clock, gun and Audubon, the window and stairway of the Studio, and Cane River with St. Augustin's steeple reflected in the water. I think they are good. They are 8" by 8", a rather odd size, but I think they will be alright. The reason for two of them being square, - the Yucca boudoir door and the Studio staircase, - is because the width of each is equal to the height and since there was a limit to the vantage point from which the camera could be placed, the proportions had to take on the squareness the prints present. In the case of the other three pictures, these can be re-printed in 8" by 10" size if you find that advisable. Just let me know what you think when they reach your true hand. So far as I can tell, however they seem to be alright from a mere casual glance.

In reference to your inquiry regarding the health department, I am glad to say that I seem back to normalcy but Dr. Knipmeyer plans to bring one more round of penicillin next week, --on the theory, I take it, that if a little is good, a lot is dandy. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in having returned to this subject and sharing your confidence with me in regard to your own experience. What a pity your attack had to come at a time when the clouds were already so dark and oppressive. And those were the days before the wonder drugs, too, which probably meant the difficulties of contending with the malady were ten times as prolonged and trying. I have noted your recommendations regarding plenty of liquids, and these I continue to pursue, - a kind of water treatment, as it were, although the necessity for such seems to have long since departed. My secretary misread the word, bringing forth the somewhat surprising statement that one should consume as much liquor as possible, --a recommended cure that someone like Lyle would most certainly have approved most warmly.

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From recent enclosures, you will note that Friend Postell and I seem to be carrying on a rapid correspondence about Cane River plantation homes and their approximate situations to be indicated on a prospective map. In yesterday's post, I sent him, --and what a pity you couldn't see it, --one of my inimitable maps, covering both banks of the river from the Joyeous Coast to Melrose, adding two or three more houses for him to add to the 20 odd he has already affixed.

It occurs to me that eventually this map may be of exceeding interest, and I think I shall drop him a line tonight, suggesting that by using two different colors or if that doesn't seem practicable, by ~~and~~ printing some names and writing others, the status of the places so named may be readily recognized, --red for those still standing, black for those destroyed, or if it is done in one color, printed letters for those extant and script for those that have disappeared. Don't you think this a good idea.

And further back in my mind slumbers the possibility that eventually a Cane River book might be contrived, largely pictorial, and such a map as that we are now contriving would be splendid, both as an item of interest to the pilgrim and as a record for the average reader.

I am not surprised that Friend Postell is floored by the concentration of pleasant plantation house in ante bellum times in this area. It vies with Natchez in this respect, and so far as I know is the only region in America where so many were built in such close proximity to each other over such a long distance, -- perhaps 40 to fifty miles. In the South Louisiana of Friend Postell's youth, there were lots of distinguished ante bellum homes, but usually these were at least a mile apart, and often several miles distant, one from the other. But in this neighborhood, we have already affixed 8 within a mile, and I know of two or three more to be added. You will recall, too, that Beth's Beaufort isn't so far from the Uncle Phanor place, while Lestan lived just across the road, Emanuel Rudhomme just across the river, Jean Rudhomme next door to Lestan and Jean Baptiste adjoining Jean. And so the thing ran, step by step, and after taking Friend Postell around to examine some of the old foundations of departed manor houses in this area, it was ever so evident how true Miss Ida Campbell's statement that when she was a girl and traveled to "atchitoches by boat, one was never out of sight of one or two lovely old plantation homes.

But I see my tangent has carried me so far I have landed slap at the end of this sheet before realizing it. I anticipate a fairly quiet week end, and may you be as lucky, too.....

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4414

Sunday, September 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your letter of Monday last past in the mail of Saturday last past.

I hasten to urge you not to make a search for the 1758 emancipation of Marie Therese. I, too, have searched for the copy of the document but find it not. Perhaps that magical date is something I stirred up in my own mind, confusing the transfer of slaves, among which she was one, with the date of her freedom papers. Were we doing a history, factual and iron-clad, the precise moment of her emancipation might of course be imperative. But as our current opus is primarily a pictorial and word picture of a place and a couple of personalities, and not a source book, we can readily cover the Marie Therese matter by merely throwing in some such phrase as:

"Marie Therese first appears in the Louisiana colonial records when she is listed in the transfer of slaves, as covered by the will of the widow of St. Denis or whoever in 1758, and her next appearance is set down in property transfers and the birth records of her children.....or some such.

We can sprinkle in another few dates further along when we get to the purchase she made of her daughter for \$400.00 and her grandson, Joseph, of which we have data to hand.

The enclosure from Deborah sounds alright, and so we shall have one statement about books from the Louisiana State Librarian whether la belle Wagner comes across with a different type of the same subject, and I have written Mrs. Wagner a prodding letter, and probably we shall have a tome from her eventually. Deborah's reference to Sam Jones stems from what I remarked in my letter to Essae Mae regarding the bouquets tossed in her direction by Sam Jones the other night over the radio, and how he sang her praises and those of the bookmobile, -- a tune that sounded so startlingly different from his attitude of a few years back when, as Governor, he came within an inch of vetoing all funds of the Library Commission and declared at the time he had never even heard of the bookmobile.

Under separate cover, and within the next day or two, some photographs will go forward for your consideration, -- and, I hope, delectation. To each I am attaching a few particulars about

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each, but, in a manner of speaking, I find myself somewhat up a tree regarding the number of words accompanying each. Per aps you and I ought to decide between us just how the publisher will be persuaded to treat this material.

As I envision the handling of this matter, it might be done in either of two ways: - to wit

1st (and preferred, full page reproduction slap to the edge of the page, with the caption covering each illustration on the adjoining page, facing the picture. If this is adopted, then each picture will require rather more data than I have set forth.

or

2nd, - should we rather attempt to have the illustrations cover but half a page, --somewhat after the manner of the Natchea book (Hastings House) of Nola Vance Oliver, with the other half of the page devoted to particulars about the picture.

It seems to me the value of each illustration is lessened if the picture be almost a whole page with nothing more than a couple of tag end sentences appearing at the bottom of the page.

In short, my idea would be preferably for full page illustrations with text on the facing page. But if this doesn't seem feasible, then I would recommend half page picture, half page text. What is your thought on this matter. You can judge better of course after seeing some of the photographs in question, but until they reach your true hand, you might be turning the matter over in your mind. Captions, naturally, for any illustrations are usually left for the last thing, but in the present case, where pictures are bound to play such an important part, perhaps the major part, it seems to me almost imperative that we more or less decide at this stage of the game, for if quite a lot of data is given with each picture, it will be too repetitious to scramble up the same details in another section of the volume devoted to the printed word only.

And may I thank you for speaking of the Robinsky data covering the Hatchitoches archives. Brace yourself against what I am about to say: - that should the Melrose Scrapbook go over nicely, it seems to me a Cane River pictorial-historic item might be a logical sequence, --eventually, and in that volume I should think we might use the Robinsky items to especial advantage. Perhaps therefore you might hold the notations momentarily, and as I emerge from the present scuffle, they will form a grand foundation for contemplating to move toward the next objective. And by the way, in view of the possibility of a Cane River item, I think I shall try to avoid using Cane River as much as possible in the current effort, substituting where ever possible the word Melrose, don't you think so.....

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Monday, September 18th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It's humid and a bit hazy tonight, following a little shower this afternoon, but a blur in the western sky indicates the new moon is up and doing as locally Summer sails languidly ahead with no apparent thought of a possible impending Autumn. I might say the same thing for the fine banana plants along the front gallery, too, for a couple of them quite unexpectedly started putting out fine blossoms this morning, just as though a frost is never to be considered before mid November before the little bananas have much to offer by way of growth.

Well, so it goes, and I guess I failed to mentioned yesterday that I saw the Rands for a few minutes, but, as usual, they had so many guests that I didn't get an opportunity to talk much with them. And the pictures Dr. Rand took several weeks ago for me, - of the little cannon, the weaving house and so on, --none of those things were mentioned either, although there was talk about having movies at their fine camp next week end, --movies of the August baptisin's, I believe, accompanied by sound recordings made while those religious ceremonies were going on. No wonder studies of cannon and log houses are forgotten, I reckon I would, too, were I fiddling with a baptising with sound, --but I'm not. And so I reckon I shall have to entice an Alexandria photographer up this way again as soon as I can.

And speaking of pictures? I got a few off to you this morning, and I reckon they may have reached you already or may perhaps take an extra day to reach your true hand.

You will readily recognize those of recent vintage, and I shall be interested to have your candid opinion as to their merits for the business to hand. The 2 sets, - one large and one small, of both the Studio and the Log Cabin, appear comparatively faint as contrasted with the other items. They were taken years back before the present horticultural screen had about completely blotted them out so far as the camera lense goes. As a record, they are of value, and as evidence of the remarkable accumulation of buildings in the gardens of Melrose, they may have their place in our volume. But perhaps we shall have to await final gathering together of all the other illustrations before we decide to use these or not.

There is something extraordinary about the contrast between the prosaic appearance of The Studio as a building and the strikingly beautiful fan light and staircase, but if you think that contrast cannot be brought out pictorially, then you will feel quite free to discard the picture of lesser interest.

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I touched on the matter of the captions in yesterday's letter. You will have already noticed I attached these to the pictures, more for your own consideration of the subject matter and as a tentative statement for each illustration than with a view to anything that would not stand a heap of editing. Perhaps the flock of names of artists I included in the caption of the Artist's Corner seemed much too much. Except for "addy" Suydam, however, all are living and it seemed to me as I jotted them down, they or their friends would be happy about their mention. (Forgot la De Vargas is dead but she has a billion kin folks around.)

The plantation stationary was tossed into the package at the last moment. You may have no need for it, but this seemed a good opportunity to send it along regardless.

I divided my morning between Arenbourg and Underwood. The present humid period seems to be inducing growth among both weeds and cultivated things, and in the latter group your Fortuni continues to expand with marvelous abandon. I concentrate primarily on weeds now hastening to go to seed, with greater sense than the bananas at first thought, but on second pondering, perhaps the banana, too, is impelled by the same impulse. I concentrated pretty much today on a flock of broom that somehow or other got started in the neighborhood of the elephant traps. It is said that T. Jefferson, Esquire, of "onticello, imported the first boom from Scotland, but that importation, I fear, so far as I am concerned turned out to be of dubious delight.

And skipping from boom to Henry Tyler, which is really quite a jump, I really must congratulate you on having selected that letter from his pen, to be included in the Letters Miss Cammie Liked to Receive. I think it wonderfully typical of letters in general penned with difficulty by our friends in the Tyler bracket of learning, and it seems to me it adds just the proper note, especially when sandwiched in between a couple examples of greater literary facility.

Currently I am threading my way most cautiously along a painfully contrived statement of glimpse-giving paragraphs about Melrose and the Madam. I try not to touch on things included in the Gnae River Children of Strangers article, - that's one thing, - so we may include that article, too. And at the same time, I peek away at the current thing with a view of selling the book itself to the publishers, trying to tuck in some good reasons why the place and personality is extraordinary.

Did I mention I lost track of the Friday night Four Piano Quartet, all of North and South Korea and world doings generally when my radio collapsed on Thursday night. It's really wonderful how the world keeps right on turning even when the newscaster have been but completely eliminated.....

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Tuesday, September 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

No 1st class mail yesterday, lots and lots of it today, and best of all, your two grand letters of Thursday and Friday last past.

And may I hasten to congratulate you on your nice letter to Helen. I thought it so nice of you to mention Mexico, thus giving her an opportunity to strike a kindred note slap off. It will be fun seeing how she feels about the business.

And thanks much for all the details about goings-on in and about Manhattan. I had heard some reference to the S. S. Liberte, but never realized it was a former bateau which we both had used under another name. It is good to have Egon's reaction to proceedings and the impression he had of the outfit. It sounds as though it may have been refurbished into something terrific and I thought it sufficiently modern to satisfy my 20th century sense of living as it was in the old days. How well do I remember the first impression the Ile de France made on me when it made its initial bow. I went to some kind of a reception at the time of her maiden voyage and wasn't enchanted. Later I crossed on her and was complete convinced that my original impression had been correct. I am not quite sure just what I like best in the way of interior decorating on a big liner, but I guess something in the nature of a conservative hotel lobby suits me best for mightier vessels, for after all, modern contrivances pretty well insulates one from much feeling of the sea, and generally speaking an Atlantic crossing on the bigger boats is little less than a week out in a floating hotel as between here and there, so perhaps the conservative hotel feeling is as practicable as any.

I am glad you found the Melrose article Lyle wrote alright. I think your suggestion regarding the insertion of his name up in front rather than the end to be a good one. I am glad, too, that you are keeping the transcription, and I can dash off a little introduction any time. All that you have labored on so magnificently has been the foundation and frame work, and we can put the "mud mixed with deer hair" in between as the general lines become clear.

I am currently laboring on what will probably turn out to be the "opening gun", so to speak. Just for fun and to give it a bracket temporarily, I have headed it "Melrose and the Madam".

I haven't gone very far with it, but so far, so good, I guess, although I haven't had any of it read back as yet. But I propose

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to go slap ahead on the thing and will send it along for your suggestions within about a week.

I'm so glad you mentioned the matter of some bulbs, for it is now getting around to the proper time for considering such matters in this area. I have been concentrating a bit of late on those at Arenbourg, --or the section where they best thrive, and I should be ever so delighted if you would like some of these. I shall get them going within about a week, too, and I think they will do nicely in a pt in the aura of your Louisiana section at home. Confidentially, there is a faint glow of yellow appearing in the persimmons, and as I had in mind to bounce a couple in your direction shortly, it will be so easy to slip in a couple of Arenbourg bulbs at the same time, don't you think so.

Returning to the scrapbook, may I urge you not to let the prospect of marketing it weight heavily on your mind. I count on the pictures to sell the idea. When it is pretty well assembled, we might bounce it at Harper's or Hastings House or some such. If they don't like it, we can always end up as a last resort resort in tossing in the direction of the L. S. U. Press.

I don't want it's marketing to worry you more than merely posting it to one publisher or another. Please assure me that you will divest your mind of such demands.

In reference to the trip to Marshall, that is rather improbable. My thought about Marshall was that should Caroline be passing this way some morning, I might ride up with her to take a look at the place, and return here later the same day. But much of such a possibility hinges on a flock of circumstances, -- which day of the week it might be, how the set up is here as regards the Shreveport contingent and so on and so forth. If, in the long run, after your own expert sense of a fitness of things as shuffled the various photographs and articles together and the whole thing has been rejected by New York publishers, we might then send the thing to Helen, who, after giving it a once over, can make recommendations or not, and then the thing can be submitted directly to L. S. U.

Today has been vastly broken in to and I am not at all happy about what I haven't accomplished. Mrs. Gordon Randolph appeared a little after 9 this morning, just as I returned from Arenbourg, bringing a couple of friends with her. They had chatted with Blythe before leaving home, and she had sent them a to me with a message asking me to dine with them at the camp at noon. I declined but accept an invitation to have a round of coffees with them at 1:30, as I had to pass by Puny's house anyway. I was home by 2, in an uncertain drizzle, but had just begun hammering on this keyboard when half of Washington, D. C. blew in, -- Department of Agriculture or some such. But I am hoping to knock off a page or two before folding up, and thus our current project will grow. I shall fold up with Peter Illyovitch and hope against pilgrims on the morrow.....

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Wednesday, September 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

First off, -- and so I may not forget it, may I say that I think the Enterprise article about Josephine Monette seems to be the better of the two. I recognize, however, that in all these matters, being so close to them, your judgement with its accompanying excellence of perspective, is much better than mine.

And second, I am sending under separate cover a mailing tube containing four different subject:

1st: the two sheets of drawings of the African House, executed by the Historic Buildings Survey. I believe they carry in printed form all details covering subject matter as to agency executing them and for whom, etc. They somehow give a stamp of authenticity to the building and it seems to me at least one should be included in the Scrapbook, -- and, if the publisher concurs, both.

2nd: Nina's drawing of the original St. Augustin's Church.

3rd: St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou.

4th: -- Nina's Drawing of the Chapel.

I have attached captions to each of Nina's pictures. I think the African House blueprints, carrying data as printed, need no captions.

I shall send the End Paper sketch in a few days. It is on bristleboard and therefore must be sent flat. I suppose the group of photographs, -- cotton stencil and so on, should be here within a few days. I thought I would send the End Paper and the photographs in the same package, and by spacing the shipments a few days apart, their arrival will make them easier to contend with, coming at separate times, don't you think so.

The captions attached to Nina's drawings are tentative, of course. I thought they would help identify the pictures and at the same time provide material which may be cut down or expanded to satisfy which ever necessity we encounter as the volume takes shape.

Then, too, it occurs to me that if some unexpected twist should develop, whereby it might seem desirable to submit them, -- the photographs, sketches, and typed material for a preliminary "once-over" by a possible publisher, the data covering the pictures, although tentative, would be desirable.

OSM

4421

And now, having done so much talking, may I hasten on to thank you for the surprise air mail in today's post, containing the yellow pages from Dora's past correspondence.

How remarkable you are to have thus been able to put your finger on such items, and to have thought of me so promptly.

With cotton rolling madly, I shall not be able to jig-saw it into the article about Clemence for a few days, but when I have had such an opportunity, I shall return it to you forthwith.

I think I ought to apologize to you for having seemingly dithered so long about getting off the hand letters and the McInness sketches to you. Somehow I got the impression that during the onslaught of the South American section, you would be so tied down with a heap of things that it would be desirable to burden you as little as possible with such matters. But I reckon I must have bungled the business somewhat, giving the impression I was sending them from day to day, - and then never sending them. Well, be that as it may, I have a feeling you will understand my impulses were kindly even though they turned out to be just so many paving stones for the hot place.

Going back to the McInness drawings, - I am not sure we shall want to use all three. The one of the Chapel, - if the Chapel is to be illustrated, must be used, since a camera cannot get in both the cross, the saint and other details, what with the limitations of space denying the camera adequate distance. In the case of this particular sketch, I think we might have it photographed for the record. I hesitated about having it done here, thinking it would be just as well not to put it within reach of that strange Holoman woman.

If I can get a good photograph of St. Mary's, - and I doubt if I can, - I should prefer to use a photograph, but what with the mailing tube heading in your direction and believing in playing safe so far as having the thing to hand in your folio, if needed, it seemed best to include it. As for the original St. Augustin's Church, I am not sure that is imperative, either, unless it be in contrast to the excellent photo of the present structure as vaguely revealed in the contemporary shot. But it is better, too, that that be in your folio, just in case. As a gesture of appreciation and unselfishness, we ought to eventually offer to return them to the artist when the matter of the book is settled, but let us hope she conveys ownership to us, for I think you will concur with me in finding the Chapel one particularly satisfying as to just what it is, a splendid piece of contemporary artistry.

And, in thanking you again for your air mail, may I at the same time, - and with the greatest pride experienced in years, direct your attention to the enclosed Postell item, calling your especial consideration to his bouquet about my famous and inimitable maps, of which he has recently had two examples. It's the first time anyone except your own good self could figure them out, so naturally I'm all puffed up.....

OSM

4422

R.D 9/19/50

Thursday, September 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

From the date, I take it that it must be the first day of something or other but the thermometer suggests we may have perhaps reached the full tide of summer heat. It seems a little odd, what with "October's bright blue weather" scheduled for 9 days hence.

And may I gallop on to say your Air Mail came through nicely this morning, slap on the heels of yesterday's notations regarding Clemence, which, as you so thoughtfully anticipated, were here in ample time for going over at a Knipmeyer sitting. It's good material and I know we shall be able to work it in nicely.

The registered items will be coming to hand in a day or two, and thanks for the two little extra notes tucked in to your letter, - and wasn't it gay, the story of the bestowal of the honor by a man named Black who was white on the man named White who was black.

And may I pin a cluster of oak leaves with many citations on you for mentioning the panther episode by Dr. Chase as he passed through this neighborhood. You are extraordinary. Frankly, I had been thinking about the episode, but determined not to mention it, in view of all the labor it might entail, tracking the beast down, so to speak. And thus again you have anticipated my thoughts, or more probably you have read them from afar.

The reason I had been thinking about the Chase item was due to the thought that occurred to me the other day that it might be interesting to have a picture of the wooden bars at the windows in my boudoir, which, as you know, were originally built into the openings of this house, - all openings, including doors, for the sole purpose of keeping predatory animals out. Your reference to the episode clinches my determination to get some photographs of the construction of the Yucca unit, and the Chase memoir will be the perfect medium for explaining the presence of this odd architectural feature.

And while on the subject of the Scrapbook, - and am I ever "off it", I might observe that the material grows more and more pictorial as time goes on. Today I have rounded up ten good pictures taken by Miss Post in 1940. I shall write captions for them and attach them to the pictures, to go forward with the other photos with accompanying captions when I send Nina's pictorial map. This group includes several excellent studies of mulatto types, the like of which have never appeared in print, and are studies among other personalities, of Henry Hertzog, referred to by Rudolph as

SSM

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the Madam's loom builder. These photographs are about 12" by 18" and need not, I think, be reduced in size until after the Editor has had an opportunity of looking at them and deciding if they should be included. For all I know, the publishers may have means of reducing or enlarging certain pictures to the appropriate size, but as I probably mentioned before, I rather favor submitting too large rather than too small illustrations on the theory that the larger ones usually are more striking and appealing than those in miniature.

In this group of pictures, too, is one of the old store, - so typically ante bellum plantation, showing people lolling on the gallery, - the old building hard by the front gate, and there is a splendid one of the wash house, with its roof in the Chinese manner, and one of the back wing of the big house with is nice, too.

As we undertook the present task, it seemed as though we weren't going to have many pictures. But now begins to look as though we might have more than ample. But it is better to have some to discard than a want of them, don't you think.

The mail today was fairly heavy. You will love the gay note in the King Solomon epistle. As for the Macmillian note from Gladys Sharpe, I take it this must have been tossed off after she had received a push from Helen. The Latham she mentions is an old friend of L. L.'s, and it is possible that the 5th Avenue portal might swing a little wider because of that and because of the Latham-Saxon friendship dating over a period of years. Any way, we shall at least have this little address to hand, should we finally decide we might drop the thing in the mail at Grand Central to be carried down to 5th Avenue when the thing approaches the boiling point.

It seems to me that the last few Thursdays have been particularly hurly-burly and today was no exception, for while everything ran along ever so pleasantly, the interruptions were so timed as to discourage much effective progress in things I wanted to attack. I couldn't resist a couple of hours at Arenbourg this morning, it was so delicious there between 5:45 and 8. But it was the cool part of the day and a splendid ozone blowing up from the surface of the river that was invigorating. I saw the people across the fence for a couple of moments at 9. There seem to be lots of social items on the calendar, but I paid no attention to the details, excepting those which might effect my program, as for example, the impatience to get to New Iberia for several days around the 30th when the Sugar Festival is in full swing, dancing in the streets, and the Lord knows what all. And then there the Knipmeyers and Taffy's baby had to be buried, and some delightful people from New York, and so on. I must beg your forgiveness for all this tittle-tattle which has no excuse except to give you a hint as to how Thursdays are want to unroll. But your letter made everything about the day worth while, and a billion thanks again....

SSM

4424

*Guil Banks'
Red River
campaign*

Friday, September 22nd, 1950.

Nenirabdom:

And so may I tell you that the nice fat envelope came to hand, Registered, in this morning's post, and while neither of my wandering secretaries have turned up this evening, - what with cotton rolling, they must be monkey-tonking at the moment, I still have the pleasure of the grand portrait of Madame de Pompadour which I can enjoy without any assistance on their part.

What a strange margin..... *James M. Cain.*

Knowing of my admiration for that lady, you will scarcely need be told how enchanted I am to have such a fine likeness of her which I have gracing my bookcase, along the shelf just above my pictorial "Tel" of Marly. Somewhere or other I once read of a remarkably beautiful lace gown she once wore at Marly, so perhaps her present situation is homelike to her, and as for myself, I am delighted.

And may I tell you how a little bell in my memory was struck today, - recalling your kindness last year about this time, if memory serves my calendar correctly, when you advised me that one novelist, named Kain, was doing a book about the Red River campaign of General Banks.

Well, I naturally thought of you instantly when in responding to a tap on my door, I found none other than Mr. Kain, - if that is the way he spells his name, but regardless of the spelling, there he stood. And in manner and appearance he was no Harnet T., either, but rather vaguely suggestive of the late David Belasco, - dark suit, white hair and a very pleasing voice. My guess is that he is perhaps in his mid 60's. It seems he is just getting around to do his field work, and this was his first visit to the Cane River country. (What a lot of canes we're getting into this page).

Well, anyhow, it seems he had been but scantily welcomed by the clerk at the store and it was only through Aurellia that he contacted me. I was to learn later that he fared little better at Magnolia.

But naturally I was glad to welcome the man and broke the ice by laughingly remarking that in spite of his name, he was welcome,

ASAD

4425

although another person bearing a similar sounding "handle" was persona non grata in these parts. His response was immediate, and brief:

"I have heard so many unpleasant things of all sorts of things about 'my name sake', - I am almost embarrassed to pronounce mine for fear of the hearer being mistaken in the identity."

Before we got through with our sitting, Mr. Kain decided he wanted to put Yucca in his book, as the Army passes along this way. He hadn't realized before that Banks had passed directly by the door, having supposed that he traveled along Red River in his retreat from Hatchitoches to Alexandria.

He was as gracious as could be and seemed glad to let me know anything he had covered in the Banks operations around Alexandria. I didn't mention letters, naturally, but I did make inquiry about the length of Banks' stay in that place. He told me the Union Army quitted Alexandria on May 15, --sooner than I had supposed. I asked him about military operations in that area for the balance of 1864, for I thought it would be nice to find out what was cooking there in September and October when our A. S. Dupre letters were being penned. He told me that following the Yankee withdrawal, the Confederates in the Alexandria neighborhood immediately set to work building two big forts to dominate the river, one on the Alexandria side and one on the Pineville. It probably was in the construction of one of these forts, I assume, that our Mr. Dupre was engaged when penning his letters home.

I asked if men were impressed for this service, but Mr. Kain thought not. But he said there was a heap of chicanery that went on that sometimes got Southerners into work gangs without the men in charge being mindful of the status of the people being employed. It seems that bush-whackers or hill bilies, - and the Lord knows Gorham and Montrose must have had their share, would frequently follow the passage of the Union Army, and passing as Government officials of the Confederacy, order men to proceed to the nearest city to work on such things as fortifications. The planter would sometimes present himself for work at the specified place without explaining how he felt impelled to place himself in such a position, and the officials in charge of the project would put such people to work immediately, and that sometimes weeks or months would elapse before it was discovered that the men originally posing as officials when calling at the plantation had in reality been charlatans who merely wanted to get rid of the men for a few days so that they could better raid the place, drive off the stock and, if possible, plunder the residence and out-buildings. Perhaps this explains in part the "take care of my little ducks" and have some of the Florenz family "take care of my horse".

It was a profitable and pleasant meeting for me, and later I learned indirectly he told someone in the Magnolia area, where he was not received, that he ever so much hoped to express himself later for or by way of appreciation for his time at Melrose. And so, you see, your clipping served to bridge another gap as between Melrose and Manhattan, and I

was tickled

SSAD

4426

Sunday, September 24th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your nice letter, together with the Moore letters and the transcripts, arrived safely in Saturday's post.

May I say thank you for all, and most especially for your grand letter, giving me a little glimpse of how things swirl in your neighborhood. "What a pity you had to miss the First Pianon Quartet program, and let me pause for a moment to feel sorry for myself, for now, after jockeying that excellent item around for a while, they have, as you may have heard, put it slap in the most unfavorable hour of the week, - 6:30 on Saturday evenings, - an hour, in spite of time differences as between Melrose and Manhattan, that will make it impossible for me to catch, and even for you, I can well imagine that it may fall at a most unseasonable hour. One nice thing about it when presented even rather late at night, one at least could enjoy it without the clatter of impending supper dishes, hard on the heels of the exhaustion that comes with every Saturday afternoon in town. But beating one's head against a stone wall is altogether silly, and so I shall desist after these first few knocks.

You ask about the "save" in the Madam's letter wherein she refers to Lyle and the State Guides. I reckon this must refer to a hitch in the National program when, if memory serves, and it may not correctly, there was a change in policy due to the cutting down of funds by Congress that made it necessary for the individual States to assume more financial responsibility to carry out the Writers Project to a successful conclusion. It seems to me that Lyle, as regional head, had to find someone who would pay all expenses except salaries, - office rent, stationary and so on. I believe it was then that through pressure put on Louisiana, -- and possibly some other States, - that Essae Mae, for this unit, succeeded in getting State appropriations for carrying on the work with funds advanced by the Library Commission. This accounts for the letter by Essae Mae as reproduced, if I remember correctly, in some or possibly all of the Louisiana Guides when they were first brought out. I don't seem to remember if other States were wheeled into line by the same or parallel means, and it is possible that the four guides mentioned had to do with other books the Louisiana project was working on, - including, no doubt, the one on New Orleans, for I believe there was one, and, --horror of horrors, possibly Gumbo-Ya-Ya, too.

And so you heard the rendition of our Overature, too, and how nice, for about the same time, I was having a round of the same piece on our back gallery, and somehow feeling not quite alone in my enjoyment.

4427

4427

I was so glad I went to "Church" this morning on the terrace at Arenbourg. The river was all silve the sky blue with the peace of a delicious dawn permeating our little universe.

For the balance of the day, it has been Grand Central at commuter time, for from 9:30 this morning until now (9:30), I haven't been alone a second and pilgrims, making the most of the fine weather, were busy all afternoon, one set treading on the heels of another. It would be interesting to know from how many States different ones came, - and I recall South Carolina, California, Nebraska, Florida, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi, Kentucky and Idaho. As I pushed the last group out at first dark, the Gordon Randolphs drove in, saying that they had come to pick me up to go over to the camp where the Rands were showing a movie of the baptisin' and other local scenes, - Clemence busy at her paint pots and such like.

A screen had been set up on the fende, separating the lawn from the cotton patch, the audience facing the East, toward the gin. I suppose there were perhaps 100 or 150 of our friends quietly seated on benches and in rows further in front on the grass. Gordon was the operator of the machine, and while the audience waited for him to arrive with me, Dr. Rand had entertained the audience with gay records, mostly of negro folk tunes and spirituals. A big old moon was rising over the gin, draped just enough with filmy clouds to cut its maximum brilliance. After each record, the appreciative audience, from whom not a peep had been heard, would applaud politely. Then the movie started and the silence continued profoundly until the first convert had been ducked beneath the surface of Little River and began flopping. Then the audience went into gales of laughter and hilarious noises, and from that point on the audible response to the appearance of each familiar face on the screen was merry and exhilarating.

I suppose this is the first time any white people on the river has ever invited the colored folks to a movie covering their own activities and news of it will jar but probably not dent the Prudhomme-Cloutier-Hertzog plantations while the white folks in those quarters will look askance at the Melrose doings which they never understood anyway, while the colored people living beyond the confines of this bend in Cape River will be a little envious of their friends and kin folk living on a plantation where such gestures of good will are manifest.

Celeste and Madam Regard drove to the camp with the Randolphs, too, and after the baptisin' picture was over, J. H. arrived from town while some bayou pictures were being shown. For J. H.'s benefit, the baptisin' picture was shown a second time, much to the delight of the colored folks who seemed to get double the pleasure out of the second go-round, and at its conclusion the applause was doubled in enthusiasm. And now I fold, sleepy enough, and hoping your day was more solitary.....

4428

4428

Monday, September 25th, 1950.

A cool mass of air rolled in sometime between midnight and dawn, dropping the thermometer to 60 and exuding an energy for gardening that might have had a mighty effect on my inclinations for gardening, had not an upset stomach slowed me up a little. Perhaps the cool weather will last for a couple of days and the "tummy" trouble not that long so that I can swing my hoe mightily on the morrow.

The sky is cloudless in these parts tonight and the atmosphere unusually clear, making a perfect set up for viewing the current eclipse which appears to me to be almost total at this writing. I accompanied my secretary as far as the gate tonight, and chatted for a moment with two simple souls from "little River" way who told me they had heard there was to be a shadow over the moon shortly, - "collectin' a heap of water that would shut off the light" and within the next 24 hours the stuff would be spilled all over us, so there wont be much cotton picking for a day or two. Let there be so much as a good heavy dew between now and Wednesday, and they will be convinced that the old water drawing concept is unquestionably fundamental.

Earlier this evening, when attempting to set my clock against radio time, I was shocked to hear of the death of Eugene O'Neil, Jr. I listened to a couple susequent news casts of 15 minute duration each, and the matter wasn't mentioned. Next to one Alexander Scorby, Eugene O'Neil, Jr.'s performances on Talking Books was my favorite. I appreciated his clarity of voice and the steady, unhurried pace he unfailingly maintained, the essays and philosophical things he did being particularly well performed. Perhaps you have heard him, too, on "Ingitation to Learning". It seems to me it must have been along about 1946 I last heard him on that program, and Xenophon or some other classic was the subject under discussion. I guess the last thing I read through his lips was "The American Frontier" by Frederick Jackson Turner, or some such. It seems odd in a way how one grows accustomed to readers to the point that they seem almost like personal acquaintances and one senses the passing of a friend in O'Neil's death, whereas in reality I never saw the man in my life.

8344

4429

At the movies last night, Mrs. Rand told me she had dined with Mary B. Lambdin in Shreveport on Thursday and that the latter hoped to make a jaunt into the Cane River country now that the heat is lessening and the countryside will shortly be putting on its seasonal pagent of gay color combination. I believe Mary was traveling with Joe Evans of Concordia who was giving some lectures on bulbs to several Shreveport groups. You will recall it was Joe Evans who became personna non grata with Mhe Madam when the daughters of both ladies were room mates at L. S. U. and Sister was approaching the time when she was to be bounced for outrageous doings. Both Mary and Blythe always liked Joe and I always have gone on the assumption that she is alright. One in 1946 and once in 1947 she passed this way, calling on the Madam for an hour, but each time it happened that she arrived just after I had left the big house and departed just before I returned, so I never have met the lady.

Little Miss Dornon never liked Joe but it was never quite clear to me just what the reason for her dislike might have been. I guess was that there might have been an element of professional jealousy in the business, and I suppose I got that idea because Lyle was forever telling Caroline she was a "weed snob", having succeeded in kidding herself into believing that God had given her special jurisdiction over the Kingdom of Wild Flowers as her own exclusive province. I guess Caroline's fulminations against Joe were the more impressive because Caroline scarcely ever has time to give much space to human beings, what with all her enthusiasms usually swirling around ornithological and horticultural personalities.

Another conversation at the movies amused me. When we were about to leave, Blythe invited us to come to dinner at the camp one Sunday, especially did she hope J. R. would accept for once in his life. He told her he should love to make it some time, and she forthwith suggested next Sunday, which certainly would be ideal, in one way, since the local ladies will be on a frolic in South Louisiana over the week end and J. R. and I will be alone. But the wife let out a wail, saying she hoped Blythe would withdraw the invitation for this Sunday, since she always wanted to be included and able to accept any dinner invitation from the Rands. And so the invitation for next Sunday was tentatively set aside, and unless I am vastly mistaken, the week end frolic will not be exclusively centered on South Louisiana, and while I may dine in solitary grandeur, or with the Rands, Sa Majeste will not break bread alone.

Well so turns the world, and I must take one more glance at the moon and then stretch myself out for the night. I shall read a page or two from "Doctores East, Doctors West" by Dr. Edward Hume, or some such, which seems to be a 20th century of medical doings in China.....

1644

4430

Tuesday, September 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your fat envelope, containing a billion things, and the package containing the hand letters to hand, and blessings on you for all.

Your Friday letter tells of your illness. What a pity you had to be flattened out. I am hoping against hope that all your labors while ill haven't slowed up your recuperation. If only one cold would provide immunity for the balance of the season, how heartening it would be. Perhaps in this instance it will. In any event, I'm going to clutch mightily to the thought.

I find the photograph of the "adam at the loom" came out wonderfully well, and how nice of you to send one along for my delectation. I reckon it will require no caption if used in connection with Rudolph's article or the one possibly forthcoming from Penland. But I shall stir up a brief line and send it along later, in case one is need.

And now to the letters. I agree with you they should not be permitted to over-balance the others. One or two or three at most, I should say, ought to turn the trick. If you feel that one paragraph or another could be taken up from one letter and fitted into another, that would be fine, for they are merely to demonstrate her interests and impulses, and it will make not the slightest difference if these sentiments are compressed under a single date line.

We must omit the reference to Norman Gunn.

He was Miss Sally's son-in-law, husband of T. Sal, and father of the two children who still live at Magnolia. He drank himself to death. It was Mary Gunn, Norman's daughter, of whom I wrote Dr. Holbrook which brought forth the unexpected epistle, addressing me as Father M., which was certainly an unexpected plaisir.

Regarding the word "log", it should, as you assumed, be written "long".

The other misspelled word, "ay something", it should be made to read "they", - the sentence referring to the white camellias.

The photographs have not as yet come through from Alexandria, and I am waiting to send some others in the same package

0611

4431

with them. As I shall try dashing off some captions for each, and as I am still uncertain when the photos themselves may reach me, it will probably be at least a week before I head them out in your direction.

My head having been a little woozey of late, I am not sure if I made much reference to the three or four fine portraits of mulatto types that I am sending. As one of the individuals is none other than Henry Hertzog (but not spelled precisely as I have contrived it), I shall not name the people in the captions but shall rather refer to them individually as to the type of plantation work they perform, for half the "arish would be in an uproar if the name Hertzog, the mulatto, appeared in the book. I think, however, that by naming the individuals such as, in Henry's case, as "the carpenter and loom maker", the caption will be sufficient, and as reference is made to a builder of looms in Rudolph's article, the identity will be adequate.

The shadow you and I thought was of the earth over the moon last night was in reality nothing but the water, as reported by local rural sages, and to confirm the point, it has drizzled all day long and is still gently pattering on the banana leaves like a muffled cannonade. An hour after the morning post had arrived, and I had examined the contents of the box holding the "and letters you had so deftly tied up with their yellow ribbon, Madam Rand herself appeared with four guests, on their way to the camp, and thus I was able to hand her her originals forthwith. They had stopped off to invite me to lunch but what with one thing and another, I declined. Having daddled yesterday, I wanted to make up for lost time in so far as possible and besides I thought banquets were not especially my speed after putting myself on reduced rations for the past couple of days.

Then, too, I was hoping the rain might let up at any moment and I could get us some cotton hulls hauled to Arenbourg for bedding down some of our pet children for the winter. But the rain never did stop, and so I shall have to attempt that exploit at some other auspicious moment. Before the Alexandria people left, some Shreveport friends arrived, - friends of Mrs. "and's, - and so the morning turned out a hodge-podge regardless.

Thank heavens all the South Americans are fairly well distributed, and let us hope there may be ever so long a stretch before holidays or whatever toss them back into your midst again. No wonder a cold should have caught up with you, what with all the hurly-burly swirling around your calendar of late. Do please take lots of care of you and may heaven prevent me from imposing upon your energies, and of all times, when such demands are being placed on your shoulders from far and near. Do, so slow, please.....

0611

4432

Wednesday, September 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I cannot tell you how indebted I am to you for your thoughtfulness in sending the Monday air mail that reached my true hand this morning.

Curiously enough, the thing for which I feel most appreciative is the unwritten message, for although you didn't so much as make a peep about the state of your health, I naturally assume that since you made it to 908, you must be but definitely on the mend. May the good work continue and may you take every precaution to safeguard what is most important to me. Please, please don't ever let all the stuff I toss at you get into your perruque. Health and conservation of it is the all important thing, let the manuscript fall where it may, just so long as the health continues to hold.

It's grand to know the week end was comparatively quiet, and may there be lots of them slap ahead. I'll bet everybody we know thinks there is something woefully out of joint with our respective brains, seemingly always finding delight in what for them appears to be solitude, which in reality, so far as we are concerned, is nothing short of a hubbub of people and events galloping through our moments not distracted by intruders and road runners.

While it occurs to me, let me hasten to concur with you regarding the wisdom of omitting the line about "loving the lime light" from the "and letters, - the reference to Friend Miller. This was one of those phrases, penned in a moment of mental instability, and has no basis of turth whatsoever. Frankly it is an excellent "straw in the wind" indicating a condition that few if any sensed as existing. No one will ever imagine, and fortunately I have almost forgotten the vast totals of such quirks that came to the surface during the 1940's that had to be grappled with immediately on their appearance, treated as humorous gaieties intended as playful whimsies, and then eliminated from the mind by laughing them away sympathetically. It was such manifestations appearing during my absence on occasion for a week or so that confronted me on my return, making each absence the more hazardous for the lady's peace of mind and the solidity of friendships which, if not set aright with adroitness and speed, ended by such serious damage to relationships of long standing that life time associations were broken for ever. Forgive me if the above paragraph is vaguely chaotic in construction. I have never spoken of this problem to anyone before and only you can guess the

SEDD

4433

mental strain attendant upon such circumstances Sister, the mulatto Henry Hertzog and the negro Sam Brown were especially adept in stirring up these mental malformations. I cannot but smile inwardly when I think how one or two members of the family had (have) told me how much they appreciate what I did for their Mother, for never will ~~be~~ they so much as dream of the battles fought in behalf of their Mother's peace of mind and their own pleasant relations with her during those years they naturally took as matters of course.

But enough of all this, and I mention it merely because I was so struck by the splendid example the phrase offered, as it was penned to a friend of Dr. Miller, so clearly does it demonstrate precisely the situation as it obtained during those years.

But now to other and pleasanter things. If you haven't already explored the same, may I invited your attention to Friend Postell's letter.

The historical data it contains is so vital to any understanding of the local set up that a copy of this letter, it seems to me, ought to be in all scrapbooks about Melrose. I shall first off write another caption for the picture (photograph) sent you recently of St. Augustin's reflected on the surface of Cane River. Surely the 1829 date should be mentioned and the name of Father Jean Baptist Blanc, brother of Bishop Blanc of New Orleans, who blessed or consecrated the Church in that year. (I might remark, in passing, that in reading the letter, my secretary invariably pronounced the consecration phrase as "concentrated the church") which is just fine, and goes nicely with his films as "films".

But while I kept my facial muscles under control on the consecration section, I just let myself roll on the floor when we got to the part where in 1805 the name of "Marguerite's" husband so unexpectedly popped on to the scene. Naturally

I thought of how the two of us would have roared in unison when it became evident that although Mr. Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana in 1803 had eliminated this neighborhood as any "coin de France", the name of one proprietor at least lingered on in 1805. Good old Pierre, (not Antoine), how amused he would be with all this and to know his memory thus remains green.

I shall probably refer to the contents of this letter at other sittings. For the moment I want to remark particularly that this information, while in no way lessening the prestige of Grandpere, it most certainly accords the Melrose Louis a greater claim to distinction, since he shared with his brother in the establishment of St. Augustin's. So many descendants of Grandpere have always pointed with pride that St. Augustin is "their" Church because Grandpere stirred it up. Henceforth they can get prepared to share honors a little, and you may be sure I shall see to it that Louis's offspring get a couple of slices of their just "pie", too. Again my thanks for your letter. Do, please, take good care of you.

SEDD

Irma Somperyac Willard

4434

Mrs. Wagner's letter
(in sep. file)

Thursday, September 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I wish I knew how to spell "klotch-bosse", for I should love to pin it on Mrs. Charles Wagner. And what impells me to be thus moved will be abundantly revealed by her letter, arriving in today's post, which I pass along to you, either in this envelope or an accompanying one.

If you don't die of exhaustion wading through the first two or three pages, you will automatically be revived by the material covered by the middle and balance of the letter.

She takes a book to inquire precisely what type of erudite, detailed and ponderous material we want, and then ends up by pretty much covering everything desired in this epistle which to her way of thinking is but the briefest of inquiries.

I shall acknowledge her letter tonight and try to set her straight. Let us hope that within a comparatively short time, she may write another book of lesser bulk, devoted exclusively to the matter in hand, but if not, it seems to me we have just about what we want any way, and, in a pinch, we can just lift out whole sentences and paragraphs, tucking them under an appropriate title and opening sentence, and letting the thing speak for itself. I reckon some such sentence as this might do:

"Of the celebrated scrapbooks at Melrose, compiled by Miss Gammie, here is what Mrs. Charles Wagner, famous bibliophile, of Topeka, Kansas, has to say: -" (and then quote.

What do you think of this idea, -- in case another panic in the Wagner household should prevent her from ever making further deliveries. And what do you say to arming yourself with a red or blue pencil, and slashing about madly with it as you wade through all the "adacadabara", spilled out with such abandon by the Wagner pen.

I did so much talking on other subjects in last night's Memorandum, and traveled so far afield on extraneous tangents that I failed to mention a couple of things that transpired during the 27th.

Along about one o'clock in the afternoon, one Irma Somperyac Willard blew in and mighty elegant she looked, in

MEM

4435

spite of an ankle in a plaster cast, brought on by a slip on the New Orleans pavements, - a handicap which did not prevent her from driving her fine new Oldsmobile, or some such. She is now with the or is the Louisiana Art Commission but the dual purpose of her visit was not concerned with Art. She first of all wanted to inquire of J. H. if he would rent the big house for a month or two to her millionaire mother-in-law, who has the whimsey to flit from Park Avenue or Chevy Chase or where ever to abide a while in Louisiana. The elder Madam Willard would be entranced to send a crew in advance to effect whatever conveniences she might specify, and with her advent would appear a staff of servants to boot. In fine, she would be glad to put everything in perfect arrangement, instituting whatever repairs or additions or whatever might be required to suit her every need and wish, and she would maintain a flock of servants, the only thing asked of J. H. being that he would accord her this right. Can you imagine.

Well, after a negative response, she asked for a conference with me. She wants to share some notes with me from the colonial papers and thinks I can set her straight on some people of the old days about whom I may have heard the "adam speak. I shall be glad to go through these with her. She has said I could have any I want, and of course I shall want them all. She plans to return on or about October 11th, for a prolonged sitting, - meaning most of a day, I suppose. She has a sister, la belle of Dunkleemann, -- what a name, - living in town. She is a nice person and really has a stack of Cane River and Watchitoches lore up her sleeve, but, as you know, is just as unstable as she can be. Her son, after graduating from Annapolis, is now in the Korea area. I suppose he is the elder Willard's only grandchild, and so probably cannot avoid millions if he survives his grandmother. And Irma, as always, will naturally continue to flit about the world just as unpredicable as a blind dog in a meat house.

Augustin & Louis
I have been thinking of the Postell information regarding the July 16th, 1829 business, - the building of St. Augustin's, I mean, and the provisions for the same in land and money as contributed by Augustin and Louis. Of course Louis of "elrose, having died in 1832, 5 years prior to the painting of Grandpere's picture, was definitely out of the running when that oil was stirred up. I must say it would have been more fortunate if the portrait could have included both brothers, and each pointing to the Church, and not just Grandpere alone.

Reverting to the Somperyac Willard visit, I neglected to say our conversation was cut short by the unexpected arrival of some Wisconsin and Indiana newspaper people who had journey far to have a glance at "elrose. As Irma's visit was primarily intended for a real estate "rig", and to make an appointment with me for a couple of weeks hence, she accordingly pulled out and that was that, whereupon at this point, I fold.....

This missed Saturday's out-going
Oct. 2nd, '50.

4436

*du. Latham
& Macmillan
Gladys Sharp*

*Jr. of the early 40's
lost during flood*

MEM

4437

Caroline Dormon spells the last syllable with an "o".
I learned that by telling myself, after a few wails from her, that the Dormons never "Ah" but forever "Oh".

*Journal of the early
190's*

Friday, September 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

What a fine fat post the mail man tussled with today, and best of all your two fat envelopes.

How nice of you to present me with the dull finished enlargement of Aunt Cammie. It seems to me it ought to be just the checker for the book section of the scrapbook. I shall tuck it in my scrapbook of immoveables, for there seem to be some gaps in the book I have been keeping, on the big house.

I think I shall have an opportunity shortly to run through the duplicates you so kindly sent along, - the one from the Dallas paper which we must use by all means, and the other from the pen of Mary Belle McKeller. Since this is a scrapbook we are working on, don't you think we might include the McKeller opus, too, just cutting out anything you find repetitious, - probably spelled rather oddly. Your own excellent judgement in such matters will suit me to a T, and will be better than mine anyway, since you have the advantage of a perspective of which, because of my situation, I am entirely wanting.

You ask about the Journal, and I don't mind telling you its existence was only a secret since it was contrived for the eyes of but one reader, - and I doubt if I need name the individual. Unfortunately it was swept away in the 1945 flood, and I say unfortunately not because it had any interest but merely because I had compiled it from day to day, feeling instinctively as I did that the chasm that yawned in 1939 forward for a somewhat prolonged period might eventually be bridged and that it might amuse you sometime in the future to plod through those early impressions of my local surroundings. But I did not continue the Journal after contact had been established, for in reality, our little evening chats formed a Journal in themselves, providing you with a moving picture of daily doings so that no record was therefor needed. In view of travels to Mississippi I used to make in the early 1940's, it seemed to me best not to keep the Journal here, and so, for safety's sake, I put it where the floods floated it off into oblivion. The thing began on the lower level of the Pennsylvania station and was a day to day business from that point forward. But at least Harnett T. Kane didn't rifle it and nobody else, and now that we can busy ourselves with contemporary doings, the early '40's don't count.

4438

Of other incoming mail, the Sharp-Macmillan letter speaks for itself.

I shall attach an outline of a proposed letter to Mr. Latham for your convenience, should you care to establish contact with that gentleman and at any old time in the future. I don't know Mr. Latham, but I have heard Lyle speak of him so often, it almost seems to me I do. I believe Mary Rhodes used to mention him, too. If memory serves, I believe he was once a Macmillan scout in these parts and saw Lyle frequently in New Orleans. I am wondering off hand why Macmillan didn't publish Saxon books but perhaps Macmillan doesn't go in for Southern books. I wouldn't know.

In any event, it is possible we might want to nibble at them a little, and so the proposed approach letter will be attached to this Memo, and if you want to put it on plan a stationery and sign my name to it, you are urged to proceed at any time the situation seems auspicious without bothering to advise me in advance.

I suppose it might be well to have the end papers and another batch of photographs to hand before consulting the gentleman or any one else. The ones taken here two weeks ago haven't come to hand as yet. I am somewhat foolishly trying to remember what each covered, with a view to stirring up captions without having them before me. Just as soon as they do reach me, I shall send the whole shooting match, together with the larger ones referred to recently, -- mulatto types, etc., and thus armed, I reckon preliminary explorations might be a little closer to hand.

Of the other enclosures, both from negroes, I thought you would enjoy, although they aren't important. The Reverend P. M. Gillie was the presiding deity at the St. Augustine baptisms which the Bands recorded in film. Don't you like "P. M." for the initials of a dark preacher's name. I am sorry to say his name really isn't Post Meridiam or even for funerals, Post Mortem but merely Pompey, and Pompey, to my way of thinking is a mighty fine name for a negro preacher regardless.

At supper tonight, J. H. mentioned that Sister telephoned him last night, asking him to come up, - it was after 9, to give her sympathy. It seems Dr. Hank had been to visit his family and the children were upset. Imagine. Well, he told her he could run up this morning early, it's only a 200 mile round trip, but being in the midst of ginning, he couldn't get away at the moment she telephoned. He further recommended she come down her Monday for sympathy. He looked at me and grinned, and I said nothing doing, - she ain't no kin of mine and I'd one run out of that commodity so far as she is concerned, don't you think so!....

God a Good Collector

If God gets his and I get mine,
Then everything will be just fine
But if I get mine and keep his too
Then what do you think the Lord
will do?

I think he will collect
don't you?

OLD

4439

Sunday, October 1st, 1950.

Memorandum:

The fat enclosures, as you may have already noticed, is the quotation from behind the pulpit of St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou. If memory serves, we ended the tentative caption for the sketch Nina did, leaving the final lines to be filled with this quotation.

It has been a hurly-burly week end, but in spite of that, I did manage to get a few things done, - mostly captions for pictures already to hand that are to accompany the ones from Alexandria, - if an when, they ever come.

Pilgrims
Saturday morning I had a couple of lovely ladies from Knasas City, Mesdames Merriman and Davis. I have a feeling we shall be hearing from them, they enjoyed their little visit so much. Mme. de Montespau etait ici chez moi apres deneuner, -- deux heures a sept heures et demi. C'est bein incroyable, mais elle etait avec Sa Majeste chez lui heur au soir, apres diner a la grande maison avec le mitron et moi. La petite domestique de Sa Majeste trouve tous ca etonante. Moi aussi. Ce soir a six heures et demie, Sa Majeste, Mme. de Montespau et moi avons faites un voyage a la petite riviere. A cause de travaille, j'ai fait mes excuses pour souper chez Sa Majeste. Quelle affaires alors, et la Reine continue a "frolicker" au sud de la Louisianne.

The Rands came this afternoon between 3 and 6, - at least Dr. Rands, his daughter, Frances, and a couple of Shreveport friends of hers. Dr. Rands named me his manager to consult with the Reverend Pompey Gillie. I think it very kind of Dr. Rands to offer to present the show at St. Augustine's or St. Mary's any Wednesday night to suit the Reverend's convenience, suggesting that the Reverend, if he cared, to, -- might charge admission and thus net the church some profit. As I write these lines, however, it just occurs to me that Little River has no electricity, - a fact Dr. Rands, I am sure, didn't take into consideration, and I guess that will hold up the movie out yonder for a while. But I think I shall use that inconvenience as a wedge to drive through the wiring of that community, - a blessing that has been long over due, and perhaps this will provide precisely the motivating push to put the thing over.

2211

4440

A lady from Baton Rouge who gets up this way once in a while, passed this way on Saturday afternoon, calling on friends in the neighborhood. As a gesture of good will, she brought along something for my delectation, - not as a gift but as a loan. If you guessed a million years, you would never hit at such an unbelievable object, - an electric typewriter. Now if you don't mind, I need an electric typewriter fully as much as Grandpa needs a pocketbook, and I shall use the machine just exactly as much as Grandpa will use the pocketbook he doesn't even possess. As a gesture of politeness I knocked off a few sentences while the lady was here, but fortunately a dozen people from various camps in this vicinity, invited, I suspect, by J. H. without my knowledge, began blowing in, and from then on everything was hurly burly until supper time, after which I said goodnight to all and folded up my beard. I have already parked the electric in an armoire in the room opposite the Chapel on the back gallery, and there it will remain until the lady decides, if ever, she wants it back.

I guess I forgot to mention on Friday night that at supper, J. H., in his usual, casual way, remarked:

"Oh, by the way, all the folks are coming down to see you next week. The Louisiana Junior Chambers of Commerce, converging on Natchitoches this coming week end, want to visit the old plantation. They want to come on Friday afternoon, October 7th."

Well, that's a pretty kettle of fish, and besides I should like to know if they are coming on Friday, the 6th, or Saturday the 7th, but J. H. assured me that it was Friday, the 7th, which is certainly indicative of what kind of a week end he was contemplating. I believe the convention is a 3 day business, Thursday through Saturday and I hope it is Saturday, the 7th, the Melrose thing is scheduled, for that means there won't be so many, since half of them will have headed ~~back~~ for home before Saturday.

botanical phenomenon
I called Dr. Rand's attention to another phenomenon on the front gallery this afternoon, after flooring the Kansas City pilgrims with it yesterday. A big old bunch of bananas have unexplainably started unfolding the lovelies blossoms, one each at the end of each banana. Nobody ever seems to have heard of such a thing and I most certain never did. Sometimes the pear trees, after blossoming in the Spring and putting out fruit in the summer, put out another set of blossoms in the fall, but these appear on the branches and not on the end of the fruit. But here the thing unfolds. --A blossom on the stem, bunches of bananas on the stem, and a whole flock of other blossoms slap on the end of each banana. What a curious lot of things transpire on that front gallery. Hope I can get a pictures of this latest twist in horticultural handspings of 1950.....

2211

4441

Monday, October 2nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

The persimmons go forward to you in the same post with this Memorandum:

I packed the fruit rather loose, thinking it might travel better, but a paper sack is on the top so you may put the fruit in it and throw the square box and packing trash away in the first ask can you encounter. There are two little paper sacks in the same package, the larger one containing the narcissus, embedded in dampened cotton hulls to keep them from drying out too much, and the smaller sack containing three hyacinthe bulbs, left in soil to keep them from drying out too much also.

As you know, these bulbs will make more sturdy stems if permitted to grow where it is fairly cool. They thrive in these parts unless a severe frost sets them back. I think they should begin growing ~~xx~~ right away in your latitude, although the radio spoke yesterday of a thermometer reading of 88 in your neighborhood which was probably in the 90's on the street, but such flights into summer probably will not last long.

My morning and afternoon was convulsed by the advent of that Shreveport number. She brought me many garments from Nina, most of which are too small for me, but they will do ever so nicely for some of my friends.

Since I have never been able to tell when Sister was telling the truth, I don't put much stock in anything she says. She was quite sober for a wonder and rattled along at a great rate, saying among other things that because of the peculiarity of Louisiana laws, she couldn't hope to get any "matrimony" out of her husband. (Smile)

And then with the alimony out of the way, she went on to explain her other financial difficulties and said she was signing away her rights to the Estate to prevent her husband from being able to attach anything. She told me she was stopping in town on her way back home, stopping off to sign away her claims, which certainly seems unexpected and landing her, - if true, right where I always expected she would end up, but never did my imagination penetrate such a curious route. She says it is impossible to live on the \$300.00 a month she is currently receiving from her husband and is bound to have the few thousand her part in the Estate will fetch her. I advised nothing except when she said J. H. recommended she take a small house in Natchitoches, whereupon I struck out my neck sufficiently to sing the praises of Shreveport.

1111

4442

I got in a few good licks at Arenbourg early this morning. It was pleasantly cool until 8 o'clock, and I had planned to devote the balance of the day on this machine, but after the tempest in a teapot blew in, - and finally blew out around 2, I decided I would do better to return to Arenbourg than attempt anything else. The vines had tangled up some of the Gardener's Garder, and by snipping the vines, the big old plumes, bent over by the weight of the tangle, straightened up automatically when released, and now are waving proudly on high, looking more than ever like the great fans depicted by Gustave Dore in his Bible illustrations of Pharaoh's Court.

Except for a flock of interesting stuff, today's post held nothing save the enclosure. I guess it is of no particular interest but it keeps you abreast with things. You will recall Joe Evans is the lady who got no thanks for trying to contact the mother of a girl who was a room mate of her own daughter, with a view to saving Sister from getting bounced out of L. S. U., but received scant thanks for her efforts. and in the end, circumstances proved that the lady's predactions were correct and with Lyle covering the retreat, Sister ended up by getting bounced regardless. Lyle's account of the final fling that caused Sister to be expelled was one of the most vulgar and effectively done things he ever retailed to me. I may have mentioned it before, how Sister, already on probation, attended a dance in one of the University buildings, and getting high early in the evening, absented herself from the party and sought seclusion in the office of the Dean of Women where she proceeded to sit down in the Dean's imposing leather chair and vomit all over the Dean's desk. According to Lyle's version of college life, this was one of Sister's least objectionable doings, but somehow it always seemed to me a high point in something or other.

The red Guernsey lilies encircling the African House are particularly lovely today, what with myriades of ordinary yellow butterflies weaving zig-zag sunbeams in and out above the great cerisse ellipse. Without knowing anything about it, I have always assumed these butterflies have something to do with the caterpillars that used to descend on the cotton leaves about this time of the year, - or earlier, and perhaps they are, although we have no caterpillars any more. It seems those insects are migratory, coming from Mexico in early summer and arriving at this point along in late July or early August in the old days. But now the Federal Government sprays the border with D. D. T. about the time the migration is due to get under way and so forestalls the advance before it gets well under way on this side of the Rio Grande. For harvesting cotton with a mechanical picker, the leaves must be disposed of before the machine starts, and that is now accomplished by some kind of acid distributed by air planes. I'm glad we don't have a mechan cal picker, - the little feathered friends have had a hard enough season with the anti-boll weevil spray.

1111

4443

Over:

re: publisher's
Scrapbook
about format &
size of photos
etc.

Tuesday, October 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

Thirty billion times would not suffice to re-tell you how enchanted Arenbourg and I am with all the nice things coming to hand by Registered Mail today.

Arenbourg was much on my mind, -- or ear, -- as I headed for the Post office this morning. I had been tidying up around the luxuriant box (yew) on the terrace when, Lo! shay we say, a big old hornet sailed out of the thing and gave me a clip on the ear. The latter at present enchances my beauty no end, with something resembling a cauliflower sticking out on the right side of my head.

I had been dreaming dreams before folding up my beard last night, - contemplating things for this season's planting at Arenbourg, and again may I say Lo! the birthday party was all in the making, and I had never dreamed of it when talking things over with our little floral friends at sun up. There is always an impulse to make such plans as the full heat of summer eases off and times become auspicious for such business. I shall continue to contemplate the catalogues and do some of my planning out loud in a subsequent letter.

Your letters of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, all rolled into one, were a joy to my soul and while I shall probably forget to mention half the thin's you inquired about, I shall hit at them as they flit through my mind, regardless of the loss of coherence, should I be speaking of other things as they come to the mental surface.

You inquire about the factor employed by the publishers in reproducing illustrations. The film is not required, but rather a glossy print only. I never did understand why the thing had to be glossy, but so it is, and that is all I know about it. But the film is not required.

I shall be looking forward with infinite pleasure to receipt of the photographs you are forwarding, and I suppose they will be here on Saturday. I shall look these over and return them to you when I forward the photographs I am hoping to have to hand before long, plus those which I have already tussled with in making captions. The Alexandria photographer must be dawdling, for the ones I was looking for from day to day haven't arrived yet. But as he is scheduled to be up this way Saturday or Sunday, I am sure they will arrive either before that date or he will bring them with him.

Hollaway
enc. 10/10

EMM

4444

You ask about my conce(cept) as to what format the Scrapbook should take. I agree with you that it should at least be as large as the Gilmore opus. The reason why it seems important to me to drum up a publisher in advance, if possible, is so we may decide on some size or other, - or accept the dictates of the Editor, for in that way the final arrangements covering preparation of material may be the more readily contrived. As the thing takes shape in my mind, it seems to me the book wouldn't have to be very thick but might make up in length and breadth what it lacks in thickness. If, as you suggest, we use full page pictures, with an accompanying text facing each, then the so-called captions could be a little longer and carry more details, and all heap of the stuff that would otherwise go into the text could be broken up into pages facing the pictures, -- which I should like best.

Vaguely in my mind the thing begins to suggest some such arrangement as to content:

The first half or three quarters of the book devoted to Melrose and the Madam, with a kind of introductory text on which I am currently struggling, but keeping it down to 15 or 20 pages at most. Then would come a photo of the big house with a page of particulars. Then would follow two or three pages of related buildings, - The Studio, the Log Cabin, Weaving House, etc., all with a page of text facing them. Then might come the Diary. Then Rudolph's piece, Caroline Dornon's article with photos in each, - the Madam Weaving, the Madam gardening in her perruque, etc., and the Wagner business with the scrapbook illustration. This would just about cover the first section of the book, except for the Letters which I forgot to mention, - perhaps after the Wagner article, or any other place that seemed advisable.

Then would come the second part of the book, centering about Yucca and the African House. This section might be started off with the "Cane River's Children of Strangers" article, for word bulk, and the rest following in picture form with facing text. The story of Emma, with the picture of Log standing by the picture would appear in this section, particulars, either in caption or in a couple page spread of words, covering about 3 or so of the Yucca portraits, Josephine Monette, Clemence and her doings, and everything we want to toss in about the colonial period and ante bellum years, -- everything prior to Aunt Ammie's bow.

How does this strike you. Of course this would make the thing backwards, chronologically speaking, but since the emphasis and greater written material is on the Madam and the public likes the personal appeal of the individual story, it seems to me that Melrose and the Madam should come first, with Yucca following after.

So much more to talk about and yet I see I am running toward the end of this page. I shall attempt a rough "table of contents" as a mere suggestion, but merely a suggestion, to which you might add and subtract and re-arrange as seems best, with a view to including it with the manuscript if Mr. Atham or someone condescends....

3M44

4445

Mrs Nellie

9/28/50

Re: ownership of letters
law
sk.

Wednesday, October 4th, 1950.
Memorandum: A book on the life of the late Mrs. J. H. Regard, a native of Bardstown, Kentucky, and I guess she must have had a nice day. I saw her at 9 this morning and was invited to accompany her and Celeste to a musicale this afternoon in her honor, but I declined, preferring to hear the clatter of this typewriter instead, don't you think so. (Smile)

Yesterday was J. H.'s birthday and today is Madam Regard's, so the cake must be piling up high next door.

The local radio station broadcast a quarter hour of Stephen Foster melodies this morning, including My Old Kentucky home, in Madam Regard's honor, for she is a native of Bardstown, Kentucky, and I guess she must have had a nice day. I saw her at 9 this morning and was invited to accompany her and Celeste to a musicale this afternoon in her honor, but I declined, preferring to hear the clatter of this typewriter instead, don't you think so. (Smile)

That (Smile) business is just about breaking me down. I had to write a couple of love letters for local swains during the past 24 hours, - one last night about 9 and the other this morning at a quarter of 5, and both of them used the same word a couple of times. I have long pondered on this custom of inserting the word, and can't ever remember having run across it in any correspondence I ever explored. Perhaps I wasn't looking in the right folio. But naturally I am wondering if it is exclusively a local usage, and if so, who and how started.

And while on the subject of writing stuff, I also was asked today to write a note to the local St. Mathew's School, giving the teacher the names and dates of birth of the parents of an 8 year old child living with Sam Brown and wife, the child being a half brother of Sam's spouse.

The mother of the child is dead and her vital statistics were unknown, but the particulars about the father were available, and astonishing they were. I quote:

"Dear Teacher,

My little boy's papa is Ambrose Pease. He was borned the 30th day of September, 1829."

Before writing the two final digits, I paused to inquire if there couldn't be some error, but was assured that the date was correct, as "Brosie" had just "told 'em off" this morning. And so I wrote as directed, marveling that a 121 year old parent should have an 8 year old child (Smile)

2444

4446

I think we should use Princess Planitarius correspondence, and I reckon we should write for her permission to do so shortly. As you know, letters remain the property of the writer until the latter dies, after which its ownership passes to the individual to whom it was written, or his heirs. This point always seemed a bit "round about", but is probably about as good a handling of the matter as could be contrived, in view of all the considerations covering such matters.

I believe the ruling is comparatively recent, following a decision made by British Courts in the 1930's perhaps. The matter came up for settlement when the heirs of Ellen Terry, the English actress, proposed publishing their mother's love letters and epistles she had received from various eminent lovers in her time, including none other than George Bernard Shaw. That gentleman didn't want his love letters to Madam Terry published, and thus, - and perhaps for the first time, - the matter came up for Court decision.

*Re: owner
ship of
letters.*
I wish somebody would do an article for Readers Digest on the ownership, custody and control of correspondence. I believe there are more halts attached to letters than any other form of personal property. For example, an individual writes a letter and it is his to do with as he pleases. But once he drops it in the mail box he thereupon loses all rights to possession and has no right to pick it out of the box or intercept it while it is in the custody of the Post Office Department who must, without vast formality intervening, deliver the item to the person to whom it is addressed. The latter, on receiving it from the Postal official, enjoys exclusive custody henceforth and may not be forced to give it back to the writer. But still the writer is the legal owner and thus enjoys the exclusive rights to any disposition that may be made of it, and so can deny the right of publication on the part of the individual in whose custody it rests. The heirs of the individual to whom it was addressed may, if so minded, retain possession of the item and can or but can claim sole ownership for publication purposes only after the death of the writer of the letter. And, naturally, in the case of G. B. S. he just isn't ever going to die.

I sent Madam Marco the little snapshot of the gallery which came from the embryo film from which the enlargement was made. From her enclosed letter, I take it she enjoyed seeing it. Her astonishing interest in things is a constant source of inspiration, don't you think. She mentions not having heard of the Whiskey Rebellion, but perhaps her school books referred to it as Shay's Rebellion, as it is sometimes called, when mentioned in difficulties be-setting George Washington's administration. I had forgotten old Wilkinson's wife was a Biddle. Really, somebody ought to do that family as James F. Adams did the Adams Family. A poor letter, scribbled while awaiting a secretary who never showed up. Well, perhaps better luck on the morrow. (Smile).....

8444

4447

Cain letter 10/1/50

Thursday, October 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

To begin with, would you mind expanding your chest to its maximum while I prepare to pin on citations uncounted and accompanying oak leaf clusters without end.

After all, your letter of the 29th has come to hand and contents noted. And I shall forget to respond to half the observations contained therein, what with all the admiration for your handiwork that consumes me.

And in today's post comes the scrapbook, together with the splendid enlargements; -- all safe and unwrinkled. I have not as yet had an opportunity to examine the individual notes attached to the enlargements but I shall get to them shortly. In the mean

time, they are gracing my somewhat over sized bed, along with a flock of enlargements reaching me today, too, - the ones from Alexandria, on which I have been stirring up captions. The whole shooting trap will eventually be put to rights and sent forward a few days hence.

I think I mentioned that the postman had a stroke the other day and remains in the hospital. In consequence thereof, the mails have been in the nature of the much advertised Italian trains prior to their autocratic operation by the late but not lamented Benito Mussolini. The substitute postman makes his rounds every day, and everything arrives in good order, but the time schedule has gone completely out of whack. It has been 9 a.m. that the mails were want to come, but now if they get here at 5 p.m., we consider ourselves lucky. And a 3 p.m. train that used to take the out-going stuff still takes it at that hour, but, I conclude, about 24 hours later than before. I mention these facts slap off, so that if confusion reigns at your terminus, so far as slowness is concerned, you will understand and rest assured that all goes well, albeit laggardly.

I find the material you copied concerning 1864 Hatchitoches and the arrival of the Yankees splendid, and equally so the particulars regarding the 1744 Inventory. "Red brocaded shirt with silver fringe bottom", -- what a business, and what a picture that all presents. I think you are wonderful to have caught all this and transcribed the same, but my wonder and admiration are mixed with dubious thoughts about the way you are putting yourself through. Please, please, please.....your health comes first, and please

4448

don't wear yourself out, - there are so many things in the years ahead we want to pull through.

If we find we need filler for the Yucca section of our book, I should think the Inventory papers, plus other documents coming to hand, might be grouped into a section entitled something like:

"SIDE LIGHTS ON THE NATCHITOCHES COUNTRY OF MARIE THERESE METOYER"

Let's keep our minds open on such a possibility, for it is grand stuff, that inventory stuff, and it may supply just the proper note, if, as we proceed, we discover we are lacking one convincing chord.

As for the 1864 Union quotation, that is wonderful in a flock of ways. Perhaps we shall want to employ it, as filler, too, i slapping it in beside the Dupre letters or some such. It is a fascinating example of Yankee propaganda, among other things, and is as old and as modern as a Gooble's machine functioning at full capacity. I hadn't realized it before, but from this report of 1864, it sounds as though the Federal Army moved North from Alexandria to take Natchitoches. I assume this preceeded the battle of Mansfield up Shreveport way, and that probably the Army of Banks then retreated South again, - Grande Ecore, Natchitoches, Cloutierville Monette's Ferry (skirmish there) and thence to Alexandria, when the last named was burned. Heretofore I had supposed the Banks Army moved only Southward, but from this it would seem to suggest they first moved up and then moved down, although it is possible that in moving Northward, they followed Red River and not Cane, and thus skipped Melrose on the way up and so, in reality, actually passed this way but once, on the way down.

Thanks to your bright eyes, this manuscript offers fascinating reading as a potential section in the current opus. Let's keep in on file menally, and in the event we don't use it in the present instance, it will make equally pertinent material for a volume on the Cane River Country, or Natchitoches or whatever. I am "bien tickle" about the whole thing.

You ask about a title for the "Adam's Diary". It might suggest more completeness and less abridgement if we avoid using the word "excerpt", don't you think. How about:

MISS CAMMIE'S DIARY

"Few people, perhaps but two, ever realized that Miss Cammie kept a Diary. Every day of her life bubbled over with such a profusion of physical and mental activities that it never seemed to occur to any one that she would think of taking time out to jot down her daily doings. Miss Cammie was in her 60's when her energies reached their maximum capacity.. Accordingly, it is random pages from her Diary for that period that are reproduced here."

4449

Note: - Grandpere's and Louis' Roman Catholic Church on Cane River at Melrose is St. Augustin's (without the e).. On the other hand, the colored (negro) Baptist Church of Melrose on Little River is St. Augustine's, with an "e")

4449

Friday, October 6th, 1950.

Memorandum:

To hand your letter, read to me as of October 4th, but which is proba ly the 1st, what with the mails being so by sixes and sevens. It is the item enclosing copies of captions.

A billion interruptions while reading this letter, and the final absconding of my secretary, whom I couldn't blame, makes it uncertain if I shall be able to clarify the one about my boudoir door, but if it isn't attached to this letter, it will be in an accompanying envelope and a succeeding one.

You can drop the Cassellmann name entirely. Harry Smith is using it for some of his work but, as I have just learned, doesn't mind if his Smith name is used in this material.

I am glad you found the log cabin with the soaring African roof so entrancing. I thought it good, but that was merely a thought without assurance, what with one thing and another.

Keep everything by way of material just as long as you please, so it will be handy by, if the publisher requires a second look at the stuff.

And thanks, too, for mentioning the "corn" - "wheat" business. If you will be so good as to adjust the thing to read as the document does, I shall be ever so in ebted to you. As you have often noted in the past, that "corn" - "wheat" business is forever a stumbling block in American history. I guess it started over the word "maize", which in Europe meant weath and something else in the American colonies where people talked of "Indian maize" which was corn. And then just to make things ever so simple, there was a vast-to-do in the early 1800's when England went to work on what Parlelament was pleased to style "the Corn Laws", which, in reality, had nothing at all to do with corn, as we understand the word, but dealt exclusively with wheat which is called corn in England. And long before I had ever reached that stage in my education, I was so hopelessly confused about what people really meant when they spoke of "corn", that I never have untangled myself at this late date, and so must have used one word when I should, of course, used the other.

While Louisiana isn't famous for its wheat, I supposed it may well have raised it during the colonial period, but since the 1770 census or some other, speaks of a thousand mules in the Natchitoches, I assume corn must have been raised, too, since corn and mules seem to

4450

4444

go together, corn being a staple food for those animals. I had always supposed the two primary items, perhaps the three primary items in the slaves' diet was pork, corn bread and greens, but it is quite possible corn, real corn, for bread made its bow long after Governor O'Reilly's day, and I doubt if there was much pork in their diet in those years, either, since the presence of so many predatory animals in this region would have made pig raising among the more difficult accomplishments.

I'm so glad you like the captions so far received. I shall welcome it goes without saying, any suggestions you have concerning greater length of greater brevity, etc. It is possible I repeat myself in placing the same facts in different ones, - what with so much road that goes between the writing of one paragraph and another, and one caption and another. For instance, today, I did a few which, for the most part, turned out alright, I guess, but first a newspaper reporter interrupted me, wanting a story about me and then a gentleman from the Historical Society wanted me to give him, - dictating, - an article on Yucca, - and then another reporter who wanted to write up the place, - not to mention the usual dribble of pilgrims and the interruptions of plantation people. Accordingly the present batch of captions may be more hodge-podgey than usual but I try to hold the thought which sometimes eludes me.

I think the pictures you sent are grand. I shall have to await another dawn, however, before going over them again undisturbed. I think the painting of Yucca, as photographed, is grand, and doesn't require the frame.

You mention the interior and exterior of The Studio and I must try to correct the errors in the caption. Something must have gone wrong with my typewriter, for either in it or the boudoir door, there seem to be curious combinations of letters in the transcript just to hand. I shall straighten these out shortly. But returning to the Studio, exterior and interior, do you think both will rate a full page, or will the publisher be likely to print them facing each other, - the great fan light window in full page, facing, say a half page of the exterior of the building, with the single caption covering both. It is good to have the caption of the fan light window to hand in case you feel the exterior merits a separate caption, so I may make the material not too identical.

In the case of Log and Emma in a photo coming forward or going forward to you shortly, I assume it will illustrate the story, and so will require no caption. Would you say the same for Clemence, or will the thing already written carry one illustration, and another one or two be added with captions to accompany.

I continue to marvel at your remarkable mind, - your memory of the name of the actor in Ada Jack's play and the remembering of it when you saw it in connection with Southern exposure. How wonderful you are...

4451

4451 *Celine's death.*

Sunday, October 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Celine died at 11:30 tonight and so Arenbroug loses its nearest neighbor on the opposite bank of the river, and Heaven must be in a flurry at this moment, dusting off a seat about as close to God as anyone will ever occupy.

And so, at a later hour than usual, I realize the pleasantest moment of the day when I can chat a little with you before drawing my curtains and calling day done.

Saturday's post was heavy, and best of all a nice fat letter from you which, along with the other things, I haven't had an opportunity to run through as yet. The secretaries were busy in the morning, I had the Junior Chambers of Commerce in the afternoon, et apres ca, la Montespan.

What with a couple little odds and ends to be attended to this morning, I didn't get to this machine before Ed Rand and some of his friends arrived to invite me to the camp for dinner, which I, of course, declined. But they linger here until it was time for me to break bread across the fence. On my return to Yucca I found Mrs. Holloman and Harry Smith awaiting me, and I plunged slap into photographic stuff. I didn't take many pictures, but each of those I did take seemed to require much time. Perhaps we shall use but two or three of them, but they may contribute something to the book. He had great difficulty in taking a Clemence masterpiece which I thought should be included, as much for her story of the picture as for the design, although the later is alright. And I thought we ought to have a picture of the wooden bars still remaining in the window giving on the South gallery. I tried to rig up something that would give a little life to such a dull subject, and believe we succeeded. I also thought I had better get a shot at the cannon, since the Rand likeness of the same doesn't seem to come to hand as yet, and then, too, I thought it would be nice to have a picture of the desk in the Madam's room, as an illustration facing the list of books which you have already contrived, as running across the top of the desk.

Pilgrims arrived before the Smith-Holloman contingent had departed and before the pilgrims had gone, Dr. Rand arrived with a flock of people. He brought me an elegant supper from Madam Rand, - which I haven't tasted as yet, and probably shall not.

12M

4452

but it turned out that I had to accompany Dr. Rand and his guests back to the camp to see Mrs. Rand about something or other which wasn't clear to me at the time, but which got no clearer after my visit. Perhaps she merely wanted to talk with me on general subjects to get back into the swing of things. Anyway we left her guests and sat alone out under the cedars and chatted about her mother who isn't so well and about a dozen people of mutual acquaintance.

Celine. Dr. Rand brought me home and Celeste hailed me to have supper with her and Adam Regard. But I declined. Sam hence was waiting for me on my gallery when I finally got to Yucca at first dark. He wanted to talk about some of his marital problems, and we dissolved them in a glass of wine. Then, as Sam left, Celine's great grand nephew appeared, saying that "Nan", as he calls her, who had had a mild stroke on Friday, wasn't doing so good. Would I go over. I would. The poor dear was unconscious, and it was evident she wouldn't last long. I feel so sorry for poor old Joe, her husband, now in his 90's, I guess, although 7 years Celine's junior. He had always loved her so dearly, now that she was dead, he wanted ever so much to be close-close to her for the last time. But the bed was so high, he couldn't get close enough to her corpse to see it well, and he couldn't find anything to crawl up on to satisfy his wish to hold her once more in his arms, and his snakey, rheumatic old legs would support him to stand long by the bed. It was all so pitiful and not a soul in the place to think of poor old Joe, what with all the tears being shed over Celine. It seemed so imperative that Joe should amke it, and make it he did, his worn old body across the foot and side of the big old bed, his frame convulsed with grief and he pressed his face down against Celine's cooling hand and wept like a child. I don't know if there could have been anyone in the room not crying; for my own eyes were too misty to have told, had I even cared to glance about.

And so Celine, departing from a circle of friends who loved her much, has moved on to greater glory, her pathway lighted by a constellation of good-deed stars whose brilliance is unsurpassed by any gone before. Already she has undoubtedly been greeted by those already preceeding her, and, if my guess is right, she will not have to wait long before welcoming good old Joe who will not tarry long behind, now that she has gone on before.

But the hour grows late and I had better break off for now. I regret I forwarded the caption for my boudoir door without having gone over it a second time. I think I could make the paragraph about the door way, - and especially the gun above it much less clumsy. If you would care to return it, I shall be glad to have another go at it. In the opening sentence, too, we might say that the Grandfather clock "still ticks off the hours" instead of using the dull verb "stands", don't you think, and if any word or phrase in any of the captions should be altered, do bounce them back as they have been forwarded without having been read after being written.....

12M

2 *see* King Solomon 4453
10/1/50

Monday, October 9th, 1950.

Memorandum: my dear friend, please send me your

The postman outdid himself today by arriving at 2 o'clock instead of 4 or 5, as opposed to 9 a.m. deliveries of the regular mailman who remains in the bed as a result of his stroke. The nicest thing about the "early" arrival was not the time element but the fact that he brought me your grand letter. *10/1/50 re Cleare and St. Denis*

It was so good of you to acquaint me with what goes on in the metropolitan theatre, and I am so glad you had an opportunity to see such interesting doings at Carnegie. Surely Ruth St. Denis is remarkable, thus maintaining first place in the realm of the Dance in spite of her 70 years. I have often thought one of the great compensations of Art to the artist, and especially in the field of the theatre, that age seems to increase the popularity of the individual proportionately with the flight of the years, --so radically the opposite of the fate of oldsters in Business. Perhaps the actor is proof-positive that practice tends to make perfect, or is it, perhaps, that the audience tends to educate itself in matters of appreciation with the familiarity that develops for one personality or another and so comes to realize and recognize the talents of the individual which might be brushed aside unnoticed, were the personality of the individual unknown to the audience.

On another tack, I am reminded, too, as I read your account of la belle St. Denis' gifts, - I am reminded, I intended saying, of an impressive list of theatre people with greatest box office pulling power in the 1930's. With a few notable exceptions, - Garbo, Dietrich, etc., the most popular personalities were the very young, - Shirley Temple, etc., and the definitely mature, - George Arliss, Marie Dressler, Edna May Oliver, and so on. It must be conceded, of course, that all were talented artists, but in the case of the older ones in particular, I always suspected that long familiarity with them on the part of the audience had somehow made the performers a part of each personality of every individual in the audience, and no matter what parts were being played out on the stage, the performer somehow projected that feeling of comfort and relaxation that is inherent, say, in immeasurable depths in an old pair of slippers or a favorite chair which tend to become a part of us, and we of them, so long has each tended to adjust itself to the other.

4454

4454

And thanks, too, for giving me such a comprehensive account of Southern Exposure. I am sure it will serve me well, as did your excellent account of The Wisteria Trees which interested me so much and provided me with so much better understanding of what was being said when passing pilgrims mentioned the play. Wasn't it interesting that certain lines of the play brought to mind the Pilgrimage article itself. And you, in turn, in giving some of the details, recalled to my own mind a quirk of certain pilgrims that I had forgotten, - a rather rare reaction, but one that comes to the surface once in a great while. The manifestation was best expressed by the wife of a Dallas banker who was brought here to look over Melrose last Spring. There were six people in the party, a banker and his wife from Natchitoches who are friends and who love Melrose for what it stands. The two Dallas bankers and their wives were invited to make the tour by their Natchitoches hosts who had asked me about doing so months in advance. The Louisiana husband and wife, long familiar with what Melrose stands for, exuded delight with all they saw, but the Dallas couples tended to be rather frigid and slow to respond to anything much. In the midst of things, the wife of one of the Dallas gentlemen broke in on my rig-a-marole, saying:

"I'll take all those solid copper pots. You can send them directly to my home and the bill to my husband's bank."

The Natchitoches host and hostess were covered with confusion but I bridged the difficulty by assuming I thought she was being playful and said I would wrap up Cane River and send it along, too, as a lanyard. A few minutes later while the two ladies remained on the inside of the African House and the rest of us were on the outside, observing the curious construction of the building, the voice of one of the ladies seeped through the iron bars of the small window. The one had apparently admonished the other, whereupon the other defensively countered with:

"Well, so far as I am concerned, I don't see any reason why I should allow myself to be dragged through an old place like this just to look at antiques. After all, I think it's a waste of time to look at anything I want if I can't buy it for myself."

If God would only stencil the cost on a sunset and hang a price tag on the Evening Star.....

It was so kind of you to send along a clipping for Eugene O'Neil, r., obituary. I am putting it in my Thursday morning folio. How can I begin to thank you for all the million things you do in "preparing a table before me".....

Pilgrim

4455

*Enclosure: Mrs Davis
Kansas City
Gnantness.*

Tuesday, October 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Miss Cammie loved to tell about the time, during the 1920's, when she had her fingers in a dozen pies all at once, old Miss Leudivine said late one afternoon:

"Daughter, the reason you don't accomplish more is because you don't plan your days ahead."

And so the Madam, well aware of the probable eventualities, sat down with her mother, and together they laid out plans for the entire day to follow.

Came the day, came a hundred unexpected circumstances and about as many unbidden people. And so that day came to a close, too, and both ladies, embracing each other in merriment, laughed as they considered their schedule, formulated the day before, and realized they hadn't been able to undertake a single, solitary item on the docket.

Today was rather that way with me.

Just as I was closing my door early-early this morning to march up the road to Arenbourg, one of Zeline's grand nephews appeared out of the dawn. He said the family had been talking it over and wondered if some notice could be inserted in the Natchitoches paper about "nan's" passing, and that if it could be managed, they would be glad to pay whatsoever it would cost.

My guess was that it could be inserted and that the cost wouldn't weigh too heavily on them. And so I didn't go to Arenbourg before breakfast as planned, but rather took the well worn trail to the Underwood. A little later I cranked up the telephone and talked with Natchitoches, and then, what with the mail running so by sixes and sevens, I made arrangements to get the copy to town -- without ever finding anybody to run through to script. Long since the grand nephew had returned home to tell good old Joe and the kin folks that "Nan's" name would be in the paper alright and so the day got started. Under the circumstances, I thought Arenbourg could well afford to await my tardiness and as for myself, I was enchanted at the opportunity to pluck such a tiny rose to lay on the bier of such a great heart.

*Obituary
for Zeline*

4452

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Either in this letter or under separate cover, I shall enclose one or two pieces of correspondence of no special interest but which I always like to share. The one from Mrs. Davis made me realize it might be nice, if the photo turned out nicely, to have a few small pictures of the Chapel that could occasionally be sent to one person or another from time to time. - I suppose the ordinary film size would be fine, - whatever that is, 2 inches by 3, or some such, just something that could be tucked in with an ordinary letter. If such reproductions don't cost much in New York perhaps a dozen or so might do nicely, and if they are inclined to be rather high in price in Manhattan, you might send the film and I could have Harry Smith knock off a few for me. Oddly enough, the Chapel seems to appeal to people who are primarily interested in the ante bellum aspects of Melrose, and in view of what Mrs. Davis has to say about her reaction, what Mr. Stern had to say, and so on, it seems to me it might be nice to be able to send them along the likeness of the sketch, assuming the it came out satisfactory. But I pray you not to burden yourself with all this business if circumstances at your local photographic shop are difficult, for the whole idea is but a whimsy on my part, and time doesn't enter into consideration of the business and under no circumstances do I want to add additional burdens to the billion items already balancing on your shoulders.

In a recent letter, you were so kind as to express interest in the balance of the Sir Walter Scott poem about St. Cloud. Don't bother to look it up, if you haven't already. It usually doesn't appear, I think, in his collected works. Never in my life did I ever know anyone who had ever heard of it. I stumbled across it in a little old book in our library and loved the poem, I suppose, because I loved St. Cloud. It was written, I think, in 1814 when Scott was in Paris at the time the combined forces of Britain, Prussia and Russia had occupied the place during Napoleon's first downfall. I guess nobody ever liked it much, since it never got into many collections of his works, but it does seem a little odd that no one with whom I ever talked, including Dr. Butler, knew anything about it. At the first opportunity, I shall find the little volume and send it along, for I have a feeling you will like St. Cloud, too.

Within the next two or three days, I shall send along some of the photographs with attached captions, together with the flat sketch on cardboard that Nina made for the end papers. I had hoped to send all the photographs outstanding, but as I am still waiting for some, perhaps it will be just as well to send these few along, thus providing you with succeeding shipments, which will undoubtedly be just as easy to handle, and I'll follow up this shipment with another shortly. Locally the weather is all bright, blue and beautiful and may you be able to say as much for your own immediate surroundings.....

4454

4457

Postell 10/9
Overdyke 10/8/50.

Zeline funeral

Wednesday, October 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so there sat three of us in St. Augustin's Church, - at Zeline's funeral, - three of us in the same pew, - a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew. Zeline would have liked that alright, and although the mourners would have forgotten the corpse and fainted, had a Negro joined Celeste, Joe Levy (Miss Ette's brother) and me, still that would have been fine, too, and Zeline would have looked down from Heaven, chuckled a little and nodded her approval.

It was a beautiful morning, warm and all blue and gold. The Church was filled to capacity, - all mulattoes except us three. There were lots of babes in arms who livened things up considerably by their antiphonal whines. Father Callahan, once of Duquesne, celebrated the Mass. My mind wandered back to Mr. Bachelier and Father Becker saying Mass at that funeral. It seemed like a curious parallel: - the one priest I ever heard Mr. Bachelier call a rogue saying his funeral service, and the only priest or human being I ever heard Zeline speak of with gusto, saying her final service. But in neither case did it seem to matter, for both scarcely seemed present or the object of the gathering, having passed from one glory on earth to a greater one on high.

My mind wandered throughout, what with none of the doings seeming to have much relationship to the memory of the person for which the charade was being conducted. I thought of those two books that appeared in France or Germany, or possibly both countries, in the 1930's, - "DIEUR, EST IL FRANCAIS and the other, - "NON, IL EST ALLEMANDE. For all the hokus-pokus of the Latin sing-song would most certainly have left Zeline cold, and I doubt if it meant anything to anyone in the audience, even if there were one or two present who might have understood the forgotten tongue. And I wondered why in the world the Church doesn't take a tuck in its skirt and put the business into English so that the communicants can understand what is being said, for surely God must understand English as well as poor Latin. But then it occurred to me that perhaps half the hokus-pokus effect would be lost if spoken in some tongue everybody present could understand, and that might impose a heap of additional responsibilities on the clergy, so perhaps that wouldn't set so well with them, at least, even though it brought a brighter glimpse of Heaven to their flock. And so the services pattered along, and before I knew it, the outward signs of last respects had been paid to our old friend, and I was back home again, more convinced than ever, that morning services, more firmly convinced than ever, that

4458

4458

this Wednesday morning bell ringing and holy smoke didn't make much difference either way, so far as Zeline was concerned, for most certainly she had taken her rightful place in Heaven last Sunday night at the hour she quitted her friends on Cane River.

As for the balance of the day, I felt determined that Arenbourg deserved some of the attention denied it yesterday, and so I spent the major portion of the afternoon in that section, reserving tonight for work on the Underwood, for J. H. and Celeste have gone to Alexandria where Ringling's circus is holding forth as it meanders in a somewhat circuitous route toward its winter home in Florida, and once in a while during the waking hours between 9 and midnight, I shall mosey past Madam Regard's habitation for no other reason than to let the lady sleep in greater peace, perhaps, knowing that the silent Nightwatch passes her way without troubling to awaken the neighborhood by screaming "All's well" or whatever those disturbers of the peace in the old days used to proclaim every 60 minutes from dusk 'til dawn.

And speaking of one thing reminds me of another, - which I may or may not have mentioned in recent sittings. For one thing, passports, used a year or two ago by la Tillinghast and friend, have recently been renewed and I heard talks of Paris and heaven knows what all for subsequent use before 1950 plays out. Paris in December seems a little odd for an initial visit but then for some people one time is as good as another. And in the same vein a Saturday visitor of last week and the week before asked me if I wouldn't like a quantity of paint with a view to giving a coat to all the chairs, benches, etc., on the gallery facing the white garden. I demurred, expressing a preference for the natural wood, frankly thunderstruck at the thought of daubing them up in gay modernistic hues. Perhaps the sugar pot in a dull silvery aluminum paint, sitting on a sickly lavender painted mill stone might be striking, - or would one say killing. Well, anyway, I ain't going to paint.

You will find the Overdyke letter as hilariously paraxocial as I did: - to wit Hurry and get your book out and in the midst of making the effort, may I drag in 50 people for a tour. I shall write him I am forced to receive the new faculty members of the local college's methine within the month, and he can drag his road runners at the same time, and thus permit me to concentrate my distraction on the same afternoon. I am disappointed with his synopsis of Grandpere's inventory and while I shall be glad to assist him with particulars about the old house, built for the grandfather of the mulatto Henry Hertzog, - hearing the same name, I shall refer him to the Parish priest for a "synopsis" of the Church records, don't you think so.....

4459

Arrived
Oct. 1950

Cane River Souvenir

Persimmons from Melrose

Larger paper sack,

--narcissus from Arenbourg

Smaller paper sack,

--3 hyacinthes from Grandpere's garden.

1344

4460

Quaintness 10/9
R. Deuchler 10/9
Ms. Wagner (card)
178.

Thursday, October 12th, 1950.

Memorandum: *[illegible]*

It is obvious that beginning Sunday, the 15th, and for the ensuing week, we have to roll up our sleeves and go to work, for I saw a Government poster tacked up on the Post Office today, proclaiming the week of October 15th as National Letter Writing Week, and everyone is urged not to let the 7 days go by without writing a letter.

In the morning I must remember to ask the clerk if he hasn't an extra one which I can fold up neatly and place in an envelope, addressing the same to one C. Ramsey and one C. Dornon, both elusive as sprites and notoriously poor at pen-pushing and speaking of letters impells me to refer to the enclosure from Georgetown. At the same time I forwarded the bulbs to 908. I sent a few to Georgetown, too, - a couple of the tiny hyacinth bulbs from Grandpere's garden, and some narcissus, not from Arenbourg as to you, but from Yucca for her, since they were from the same bed that flowered here when Joe was dwelling under this roof. And now it turns out that the lady never knew this place as Yucca, which probably isn't so odd, since nobody in those years ever concerned themselves with the original status of the place. I thought the Yucca business both as an early impression on the baby's mind and her discovery of old Abraham's handiwork a coincidence. What she doesn't know, living in Connecticut, is the further coincidence that the same family she mentioned not only lived in Hollarland for a while, to escape the rigors of the religious wars of the 1500's, but that early in the 1600's, some of them returned to the "old country", as Mr. Bachelier used to call it, while others hazarded the sea, and landed, of all places, slap in Connecticut. Wasn't that odd.

But what as always seemed a little more remarkable to me was the fact that a little later, one member of the clan still in the "old country", headed out with old Frontenac to Quebec, and accompanied him through the mid winter snows in his campaign into what was later to become New York State, and somehow during the American sojourn, got tangled up with a daughter of the Connecticut branch that was some kin or other, thus uniting the Yucca painting strain with the more military minded branch, and effecting a union that we so often associate with the Prudhommes and the like who would have done just as well had they not stuck so close to the same family tree.

0344

4461

It required the greatest fortitude on my part to "stay put" this morning from 5 until 10, hammering away at this keyboard instead of marching up the road to have a go at the Arenbourg pre-planting preparations. I seem to have picked up a vague stuffiness in the head, - for colds seem to be making their rounds, and what I actually accomplished on the Underwood wasn't of much moment, I fear, but I shall check on that at my next sitting with one or the other of the meandering secretaries. But after I had discharged the Knipmeyer amenities, I couldn't resist to delve and dig in the soil a bit, and in spite of the 85 degrees by afternoon, I got quite a few things done, although I must say I did quite a bit of dawdling on my own hook.

I had a telephone from Ora at supper time. I hadn't heard from her in quite a while and she wanted to report from her sick bed that she really wasn't so bad, but merely sagging from the excitement of school getting under way and from a heavy chest cold, plus the strange drugs given her to counteract the same. But even as Celeste braved her ailment to go to the circus, so Ora plans to disregard the sick chamber and head out for some kind of a football game in New Orleans this week end. And the killing part of it is that such jaunts seem to cure some people on the verge of illness or even with sickness already upon them. I never could comprehend such physical reaction to physical stimulant, what with my own slothful nature forever wanting to stay put when I am below par, and having scant urge to travel much further afield when bursting with vigor. I suppose the marvel of medicine is that everyone in a while Science stumbles over something like asperin that seems to suit the needs of all individuals, for surely there seem to be might few impulses to return to health that follow identical or even parallel patterns, and in my own case, I know perfectly well that it would never occur to me to make a hundred mile round trip to a circus or a 600 mile round trip to a football game to cure the sniffles. But as the famous Mrs. Kelly of Chicago remarked on kissing the cow:

"There's no accounting for taste" -- and cure-alls.

From the Wagner enclosure, we may gather, I suppose, that old Kansas will start perking any moment, if, indeed, she hasn't already. Apparently my last letter to her conveyed the desired impulse, and I shall acknowledge the present one with another pep note to spur her on, which I might make in triplicate, I guess, sending one copy each to G. Dormon and L. Trichell. Well, let me get at that right now, and thus save you from further dullness....

0344

4462

Mrs. Vernon Gloutier,
Beaufort Plantation,
Natchez, Louisiana.

*Cain letter 10/19
Carolyn R. 10/10
obituaries -
Zelina.*

Friday, October 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that your elegant package with photographs and letter and transcript came in today's post and that I am tickled from top to toe.

I think you are to receive many citations with oak leaf clusters for the excellence of your photography, and I think your idea of sending a likeness of the Chapel to Nina and of M. et Mme. Narcisse Prudhomme, excellent. But I think the gesture of the latter to Beth, coming from your true hand, as a surprise party, following your call at Beaufort one day last June would be stunning, although the lady might never write to acknowledge the same, as she seems that way about writing. Once, years and years ago, as I recall, Beth tried to get a likeness of M. et Mme. Narcisse from the Madam but the latter being out of sorts at the time, didn't effect the matter. Personally I think she would be entranced at having the likeness, but whether she should be or not, it seems to me the picture ought to be in Beaufort. And so I leave the matter to your own decision, to be acted upon at any old time you might feel the impulse; - if any. Sometimes it seems wise to hold such items for trading purposes, but in the present instance I have no inclination for such business, although I never was given one of her old coats of arms, and she never did let the Madam and me see her old Prudhomme genealogy. But none of that, in my opinion, counts. The thing is, as I see it, that the photographed should be at the ante-bellum home of the Narcisse Prudhommes, and the gift, coming to Beth from such an unexpected quarter, ought to afford her such a pleasure on its receipt, and in speaking of it a billion times in days to come when visitors have it called to their attention and you are named as the surprising donor.

As for Nina, I am quite out of touch with her, and I should have written ever so far back. But each day I have half felt she might pass this way, without proclaiming her intentions in Shreveport. She gave me an address of 1240 Third Street, Corpus Christi, Texas, but Sister gave me another address subsequently, and that I don't seem to remember. But I shall drop a card to 1240 - 3rd, asking if she is there, and shall then write her.

As you have already received Anne Parrish's letter advising of the receipt of the persimmons, and as a larger box went forward to you on the same day, you will concur with me in believing that your shipment must have dawdled along the way. If the package is lost, it would be of no moment, for more Arenbourg narcissus can be sent, although the persimmons have about played out, so far as being in a state for shipping, but if something had to be lost, thank heaven it was

3444

4463

a package such as this, being purely sentimental, and not one of photographs and pictures and things that couldn't be replaced and might be of permanent value.

You ask about Helen. I haven't heard from her since the last letter I passed along to you. I figured she must be waiting to hear from Houston before taking pen in hand. Or perhaps she already has received a "No Thank You" from that quarter and accordingly has felt inclined to put off breaking the sad news as long as possible. If she only knew how galvanized we are against depressions arriving with rejectionx slips.

But here in the same post with your letter of inquiry about Helen, comes this equally unexpected letter from Carolyn, herewith enclosed. Today is Friday, and I don't recall the date of her letter, but it is too late for me to get a letter of response to her that could be delivered before early next week. It seems to be slightly confusing to me, - what she has to say, but I guess it means she is passing this way this week end or next, and that she is coming with Helen and Lucille and husband, or is coming with Helen alone, or perhaps is coming all by herself. She regrets having consumed her vacation of 3 weeks without establishing contact with Melrose, but I don't regret it, for I have been too busy to bother with anything but stuff to hand, and besides, -- I didn't even remember, - if, indeed, I ever knew, that she was fixing to have a vacation.

I'm glad you found the Latham letter alright. And don't you worry about "my associate", for nobody in this world could so nobly toss the manuscript and photographs at lower 5th Avenue. And besides, don't ever establish direct contact with Editors if you find the contact in the slightest way objectionable, for you must never subject yourself to that, but rather just send the stuff my messenger and let the Editor return the same to you with appropriate comments. But if you should like to chat a bit with the Editor, and since you do know the subject better than anyone, I am sure it would afford any gentleman or lady a special pleasure to know you and to talk about old Louisiana a bit, regardless of whether the manuscript and pictures are of any commercial appeal.

I have hesitated about sending along the package of photographs with the end paper illustration this week, the mails have been so confusing during the substitute postman's regime. But I shall send the package this coming week regardless. I think you might tentatively include your copy of "Cane River's Children of Strangers" along with the photographs of Cane River types, - included in the pictures being sent, and explain to the editor, if I dawdle too long, that the part about Melrose and the Madam will be of about the same nature and extent as the Cane River article and will be forth coming shortly. There is no rush about any of this business of submitting the script to Latham or anyone, but I mention the possibility, so you may be guided accordingly. I should a rare opportunity of absences and contact (the one in your immediate vicinity, the other from down 5th Avenue way) make the time seem especially convenient for you in advance of receipt of final papers. I am so happy to have your letter and the pictures, they are all so nice....

3444

4464

Charles 10/9/50
King Solomon 10/10/50
James A. Cain 10/9/50

Sunday, October 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:
Not a lick on this typewriter until this moment, which is long past dark. Ho.....hum.....

Instead of getting up early and hooking myself to the old Underwood, I foolishly got up early and marched up the road to Arenbourg. The rest of the story is obvious, what with the weather fine and interruptions before I arose from my 9 o'clock bath.

Dinner across the fence, and your friend, Irm Somperyac Willard, floating in just as we sat down. She wanted to consult with me about the operation of her Department of Art which she seems to head for the State of Louisiana, and accordingly followed me to Yucca after dinner. But our conference was brief, what with half of Michigan barging in shortly after our arrival, followed by some Colorado numbers, on whose heels followed Dr. Rand, bearing a huge supper tray and asking me if I would show him where dwells the Reverend Gillie. It was 4 p.m., and I would. After all, it was in a good cause, for Dr. Rand proposes to show the baptisin' pictures in a Baptist Church with a view of charging a small fee for the benefit of the Reverend Gillie's flock. The Reverend was wonderful, his expression that of a complacent turtle, obviously puzzled at this new manifestation on the part of white people, filling him with wonder about the Rand suggestion, but somehow, apparently because he knew me, accepting the proposition as honest and disinterested, although still amazed that such things, after all these years, should actually be.

The Reverend lives up the road not too far from Red River, not too far from the Montgomery ferry. He introduced us to a neighbor. I understood him to say the man's name was "Holy Daisy", but it turned out to be Harvey Davis, which is alright, but not nearly so exciting.

Back at Melrose, the Doctor wanted me to drop by the camp to get a clipping he had for me. Most of the crowd had gone. We had a highball, sitting on the gallery above the water. The surface of the river was like a tarnished mirror, what with the first stars beginning to reflect in its smooth surface, and the svelt likeness of the new crescent moon, hanging low over the Montrose hills. I thought how much you would

4465

would have loved the peace and the 18th century provincial atmosphere.

During our ride, Dr. Rand had told me several interesting things. One was that Sam Jones, while Governor, had appointed him a member of the 12 man State Board of Health. When Long went into office, Dr. Rand promptly sent in his resignation, the only member of the Board who did. Promptly Governor Long fired the 11 members who hadn't resigned, and telephoned Dr. Rand, asking him why he had resigned. Dr. Rand told him that he had resigned because he had been appointed by a political power opposed to the Long machine, that he himself had not voted for Long and did not care to function on a Board he understood would be expected to bow to the judgement of others than their own viewpoint. Gov. Long told him that was just the kind of people he wanted on the Board, and asked him to continue to sit so long as he felt free to exercise his independent judgement. And so Dr. Rand remains, and I suppose there is some advantage in being on the inside, but sometimes voting negatively while the other 11 vote in the affirmative.

Back to Irma, she saw the portraits of the Cane River types spread out on my bed. She found them splendid. She asked me if I knew the Greigers (Basement Bookshop) who were re-publishing Lyle's books. I said I didn't. She said she was having lunch with me this week and asked if she might mention the Melrose book to them. I told her she might, explaining to them that she knew nothing about any commitments or plans I might have, which she doesn't, of course. She was enraptured at the prospect of the publication. I wonder, in a pinch, if her enthusiasm might counter-balance any adverse Lane opinions.

The paucity of secretarial assistance has impelled me to strike out at another approach to the opening pages of the Scrapbook, but I shall omit reference to the new idea until my next sitting when I may be able to send along a sample. Momentarily I toy with the idea of having the first printed page devoted exclusively to the Madam's obituary, reproduced, say, from the Shreveport Times, which, I believe, you hold. This would carry out the scrapbook feeling and give the casual reader a brief account of the lady's career. Then, with a picture in between, would come what I am pleased momentarily to entitle: "Melrose Time-Table" giving a 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. account of a day in the Madam's life at plantation mistress, breaking the thing into paragraphs, marked off by the several hours of the day. I have reached 10 a.m., and am hoping a break tomorrow may enable me to round out the day. Then I'll send it along for your consideration, with appropriate notes.

Am enjoying the Blessed Martin and M. et Mme Narcisse so much. They are certainly lovely reproductions.....

4466

4466 Kate Perkins 10/12
Dora 10/12

shipment of end paper sketches
& photos

Monday, October 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I had such a nice time at Arenbourg this morning, tucking big old basketfuls of cotton trash and hulls about the "footsies" of the Fortunis, grandifloras and camellias. This is similar to the stuff the Arenbourg narcissus were packed in, which may, or may not mean anything, since it is possible the package has never reached you. It is splendid for most of the Arenbourg items, and particularly now during this exceedingly dry period, for it tends to retain the moisture that drains down nightly from the leaves of the plants. And at the same time it is a fine fertilizer, soaking gradually into the ground to enrich the soil when Spring feeding time rolls around.

I am having Peter and Log take us several truck loads to Arenbourg so there may be an ample coverage for the roots of the crepe myrtles, nandinas, pears and persimmons, not to mention the "tiny" mimosas.

I feel ever so noble when eventually, I force myself to march back to Yucca and the Underwood, for that operation requires vast fortitude when the alternative of fussing around at Arenbourg supplies such a definite excuse for remaining in that neighborhood. But I don't try doing much outside in the mid-day sun, for the thermometer continues to "hoover" between 85 and 90, although it plummets to the 50's during the night. This alternating heat and chill of course produces a heavy dew nightly, and thus the absence of rain doesn't matter so much.

The cisterns of drinking water have long since been emptied, and we are hauling drinking water from town in big old 20 gallon glass bottles.

On the home front, the laggardly postman arrives and departs at such curious hours that communications from here must reach you on quite a different schedule. The regular postman made his round in such a time limit as to get out-going mail to the railroad in time to catch a 3 p.m. train, traveling either toward New Orleans or Shreveport, I know not which. But I believe it was a mail train, and so now everything must be departing from 12 to 24 hours later, since he sometimes doesn't leave here before 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Naturally

4467

I have accordingly been able to formulate but the vaguest notion as to when might be best to send the photographs so they would reach you at the most convenient time, as indicated in your recent letter.

A batch has gone forward today, together with the end paper sketch. In view of the lost persimmon package, it seemed to me well to insure the present package for a hundred dollars, - just to encourage greater care. I made the thing just as small as possible, the thickness being not greater than a magazine, Life or Saturday Evening Post. It probably measure about 18 by 24 inches. I hope it will not be difficult to manage.

The photos are flying around "fancy free, for what with the clips attaching the captions to each, I thought if distributed over the surface of the cardboard of the sketch, they would be less likely to crease and crack the surface of the individual print. The package will go forward at the same time this letter does and will arrive at the appropriate time, -- let us hope. I had a large envelope for the portraits of the Cane River types but at the last moment misplaced it, and so just let them slide along, equally "foot loose".

I have no duplicates of the captions. But in one or two instances have I been able to have them read back to me. There are many errors and several will have to be edited, I presume. But I send them along as they are, - regardless, thinking it is better that you have the pictures to hand and some notion of the captions, so that they may be to hand, in spite of the need for editing, when the time seems appropriate for tossing them at Mr. Atham or in whatever direction. I believe I included the picture of Madame Aubin-Roque, Denny and Lyle in the shipment. I suppose this one may have to be re-photographed to obtain a glossy print. And I don't recall if I jotted down precisely what the Adam wrote on the back of the picture, which needs to be added to the caption, including Franz and Mary Blum's name as photographers. I believe I also left attached a slip of paper giving particulars about Madame Aubin-Roque. Mrs. Holloman is vastly interested in Denny's granddaughter at the moment, hoping to do a magazine story about her, and naturally would be elated if she knew this item existed, and for that reason it seemed better not to ask Harry Smith to execut it.

As heretofore, I have noted, at the beginning of each caption the place, - either Melrose or Yucca, where each picture seems most related. Do feel perfectly free to use your own judgement in making any alterations as to placing the things for your sense of interest is much freer of warp than mine, so close to the things. Once I had thought it might be nice to scatter the mulattoes through the Children of Strangers article, but I am not sure. It is an interesting collection, probably never before assembled. Forgive this mighty dull communication.....

4468

4468

R.D. 10/17/50
Trichel 10/18/50
Caroline D. 10/19/50

Melrose Time-Table

Tuesday, October 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A heavy mail today which I may and may not get around to explore within the next 24 hours, but I don't care, for I have read your elegant letter of Friday, last past, together with the announcement concerning Madam Roosevelt's broadcasts, and I am completely satisfied.

I'm glad the package, "at long last" reached your true hand. It was certainly long enough on the road. It is surprising the persimmons hadn't all gone to glory during the interim. I reckon the ones that didn't start oozing will start ripening any old time.

I laughed at your account of your planting operations, for in the case of the pebbles, you got your "cart before the horse", so to speak. I believe the point of pebbles is that in the bottom of the pot, they will provide room for excess moisture so the roots of the plant will not decay from too constant moisture. But I'll bet your brood will grow just as lustily if the pebbles remain on top, and particularly so if there be a hole in the bottom of the pot so some of the water, - excess, - will run out.

re: bulbs
I think you were so right in disdaining the advise of your seed man. It seemed to me all the bulbs with few exceptions had started growing a little. Putting them in the ice box under such circumstances, I think, would have chilled them unmercifully if not disasterously. It is true that while dormant, some plants thrive on an interim of cold, - lilacs, for example and peonies. For all I know, bulbs might do better down here if a cold snap intervened between the time of their flowering and the following year's re-birth. But down this way the bulbs begin putting out flowers in November, and continue blooming through January and February, so that their leaves and usually their blossoms are at their height during the coldest season of the year. The leaves begin dying down in May or June and they sleep throughout the summer heat, and thriving on it, apparently, since by the ensuing November they are all up and doing again. I am sorry I had so few hyacinths to send. There are more all over the place, but I could, under existing circumstances, track down but 6; the larger 3 of which I sent you and the others to Anne. The always surprise me for producing such an imposing blossom from such a wee-time bulb.

And may I say how enchanted I am that you and the girl friend are both going to have a hand in trying to bring forth an in-door garden. Do let me hear how your respective efforts succeed.

4469

With characteristic "beating of the scoop", you advise me regarding the appearance of The Black Swan in the Negro Digest. Do I understand you to say the business is already in general circulation. Naturally I should have had this news from Alexandria, since Mrs. Holloman was supposed to advise me when the thing was or had appeared. Well, perhaps she will eventually. I suppose authorship is listed under the name of whatever the pen name was that she selected. I have forgotten, it has been so long since I heard.

I want to return, momentarily to the subject, touched upon in last night's Memo., - the Time-Table. In spite of hurly-burly, I have gone forward with the thing today, and shall probably be able to put it in the mail in a day or two. Every so vaguely, I begin to sense how da Vinci must have writhed when the idea of flying dawned in his mind but not the ability to take wings. As the Time-Table progresses, the idea grows apace, and I am expanding each hour to include little sidelights on the Madam and the pattern of plantation life during her prime. But the interruptions and my inability to glance back at what I have written and to substitute words for the chance ones thrown in but temporarily, --well as in the present instance of this sentence, I loose track of my subject and verb, and the thing is a fine mess. But still the idea behind it is in the right direction. At your convenience, you will glance it over and see how it strikes you as a chapter. At the beginning I had contemplated but a sentence or two for each hour noted. But as the thing advanced, it seemed a perfect medium for putting in a lot of stuff that might be pertinent and interesting, and a place for setting down some of the points that couldn't be inserted in other places. I suppose, - but it is merely a guess, I may have to expand the opening hours to conform in space to the ones of greater space as the day advances. You will be able to judge this better than I. If a solitary soul were about to run over the thing with me, I could rig it up in a jiffy, but there isn't anyone, and so there is no point in wring hands over that. If smart, we may be able to work it out this way: - when you have read the thing through, it might be possible to double space the thing on separate pages, - a separate hour being attached to each succeeding letter from you. This seeming brevity might enable me to keep my secretary's "paddles nailed to the floor" long enough to make corrections. Perhaps I shall think of some other means, but I offer this one as a suggestion while I think of it, and shall dish up other ones, should be come to mind at subsequent sittings.

But let me get on to hatching my eggs instead of making so much racket about sitting on them or rather setting.

Your letter fills me with the greatest inspiration to drive ahead, for somehow it seems to put you slap along side and I know the balance of the evening will sail along as smooth as silk. Again my thanks and my blessings.....

4470

Wednesday, October 18th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your grand letter of Friday and Saturday last past, together with transcripts covering Open Door poem and all, came through promptly in today's post. I join you in wondering how it is that with the local schedule of the postman so topsy-turvy, everything except the persimmons seems to carry through as formerly. Just so long as the schedule is maintained, I am indifferent to how it works.

I must pin a large cluster of oak leaves on your person for the masterful paragraph in your letter, speculating on the written admonition in the Solomon letters to smile. My secretary ran through the entire passage without ever sensing its import. For one thing, as in the case of "flims", the body of water you mentioned was read as "Shakespeare Bay" and certainly there is nothing about that suggesting either "Solomon or Maryland."

But speaking of bodies of water, I must report, and especially on behalf of the Arenbourg children, that a pin-point mist began forming about first dark last night, and after increasing to a slow drizzle, has continued all night and all day, and the Weather Bureau promises it will continue throughout tonight and much of tomorrow. I suppose this must be some fringe of the hurricanes twisting things around in the Gulf, for the Florida one, now moved to Georgia, must be too far to the East to effect local conditions. As between Little Rock and New Orleans, the current moisture has centered most profusely over central Louisiana, with Alexandria wetted down to the tune of 3.90 inches in the last 24 hours, with the drizzle still going on. I suppose we are recipients of most of this since, as you might say, Alexandria is but a suburb of Arenbourg, don't you think so and (Smile).

The thinness with which the water descends from on high, gives the parched earth its maximum opportunity of absorbing it without much of it running away. I felt a twinge of conscience on Monday in spending so much time piddling about with the cotton hulls at Arenbourg, but now it is good to know the Fortuninis and Magonolias and all have this coverage, for it will retain the moisture now falling, and we shall not have to give thought to the children getting thirsty from here on through the balance of the autumn and winter.

0744

4471

A striking thing about the poem you so kindly sent along from the Open Door is the statement that there is no key, for this is precisely the case, as you know, at Melrose. I remember some uninitiated Melrosean asking the "adam," as she was starting out for Natchez or St. Francisville if she didn't intend locking the front door.

"My land, no," was her response. "When I came to Melrose in the Gay '90's I never saw a door key, and there certainly hasn't been one added since I first set up housekeeping." Onlyx

Only little "Sweet Alberta Ben Bolt" ever did anything about security measures in the little end room she occupied next to yours. But, -- and to her vast disappointment, I suspect, -- nobody ever fiddled with her nice new shiney bolts she had dragged slap through from New Orleans. I have spoken of this business before, and what was the magical figure she trumped up as an incentive for murder and robbery:

Oh, yes: "If those young colored boys thought you might have eighty five cents....."

I never have figured out how she arrived at that magical quantity.

You ask about Charles.... and I must say I have neglected sending along a couple of letters, holding one until I could have somebody run through it a second time to get his telephone number for me, and holding the other to call Blythe Rand's attention to one paragraph wherein he had some lovely things to say about her call on him and Ida. He is getting along nicely, I believe, and has given up his bathrobe for a pair of pants, and those pants seem to represent a vast symbol of improvement to the end that I have heard. H. twice ask if Charles is still able to stick to his pants.

Celeste tells me the Melrose reception for the faculty of the Natchitoches college is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 4th, but she is distressed that on Saturday she and Dee Hertzog always like to play bridge in town on that day of the week. Naturally I told her to keep her 52 a year record unbroken and I shall be glad to receive them on my own hook. In the group will be a lady who asked me a couple of years ago if my mulatto son in the portrait with me lives here on Melrose. Accordingly I am draping a sheet over the portrait above the fireplace in my boudoir, leaving only the old gold frame showing. Don't you think this will be much more effective and bristling with rebuke than were I to remove the picture temporarily. I shall invite the Overdyke contingent for Sunday, the 5th, and that will take care of that. And so things turn, and I smile when I think of Miss Dormon telling me about enervation due to the influx of pilgrims at Briarwood.....

for Scrapbook
Rose Hansen Helmer letter
Woodcock letters

C. Y. Cannon
10/18/50

4472

Thursday, October 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Another Thursday, and Thursdays were never too productive, what with the Knipmeyer mornings and the pilgrim afternoons.

And I don't have much to report as to gardening, so far as my activities go, for the elements took over again today, and splendid thin drizzles kept going all last night and intermittently all day today. And Arenbourg continues to lap it up and horticulturally speaking, the "children" are in the best of all kinds of worlds.

During these past couple of days I have been reminded of the old adage: "If you want something done, give it to somebody who is already busy".

What with nobody in the fields, the cotton gin silent and the season too early for pease gathering, all the plantation people find themselves with time on their hands. Now the natural conclusion would be that this interim would provide me with much additional secretarial assistance. But that is where logic flies out the window, for with no schedule at all, the secretaries get lost in the highways and byways, but mostly in the highways, what with every family making two or three hundred dollars on cotton, every family has naturally dumped their or its money into new second hand cars, and the sailing up and down the road, heading out for no where fast, is the order of the day, -- and as some of the proud new owners have no idea of how a car might be operated, the secretaries, who do know how, are in the greatest demand. And this only goes to show that if I had any sense at all, I would long since have begged, borrowed or stolen an ancient gylopy and put out the word that I was in want of someone to operate the thing for me, where upon I suppose the ranks of the secretariat would have swollen alarmingly.

Quite seriously, I often ponder on who best financial assistance by the Government can best be doled out, what with examples of "spenthrift-ery" that invariably come to the surface at this season of the year. Her is a case in point: - A widow with six children, living on Little River, is on the Welfare rolls at \$90.00 a month. She owned three cows which meant much, I suppose, in providing food for herself and her offspring. When the car-buying fever struck the cotton pickers, the lady herself succumbed, and not having cotton money, she sold her three cows and purchased herself a \$250.00 wreck of a car, having no place on earth to go, and all day to get there. They ask for relief but really want a car; their need is for food but they exchange it for gasoline. It is all so confusing.

4473

SV44

But let me respond to your question ~~in~~ regarding the use of the Woolcott letters, which I intended mentioning yesterday. I agree with you they should go in the Correspondence chapter, even though they are not particularly interesting. There is just one point: - I am wondering if we should leave in or take out, --and I am merely asking your opinion, - the phrase in the one that speaks of his adopted son as having something to do with a newspaper. Your decision in this matter is all that matters, and if it adds interest, it might as well be left in, but the thought strikes me that with the flight of Time, the son might not want to stress this phase of his existence. Legally the letter is ours to do with as we please, so either used or discarded, the phrase can excite no legal objection. It was only the vague doubt arising in my mind concerning that brief reference to early beginnings that moved me to inquire as to your own re-action, and whether it is left in or out is all the same to me.

As for the Rose Franken Meloney letter, I think it well to include that, and particularly since she refers to Claudia. But I had better write her a letter, asking for permission, since legally, in that instance, the right of publication, as discoursed upon at length of late on my part, still remains in her hands. I shall in the next few days write her and the Indian Princess, - either directly, or sending the same along to you for posting in Manhattan. The last I knew, the Rose Franken's city address was in Washington Square where they had bought one of those old houses on the north side along by the Rodman Wanamaker home. On second thought, if you don't mind, perhaps I would do well to send both letters to you, since chance may toss their addresses in your lap unexpectedly as between now and then.

Ed Rand telephoned this morning, asking if I would take a flock of his California friends under my wing this afternoon, and I was glad to do so on his account, but not particularly so on ours, for it pretty well cracked up my efforts to get far in the Time-Table. But I am hoping Friday may be more favorable, and as I have advanced as far as 1 p.m. in the Time Table, I may be able to put it several hours further on the next go round. In attempting to give little side lights on the Madam's personality through this medium, the writing requires more pre-scribbling thought than would be called for in a mere jotting down of mere physical occupations would seem to do. No first class mail today, perhaps something from the Negro Digest, Waco, etc., on the morrow.....

4474 Delora 10/18/50
Helen Baldwin 10/18/50

SV44

Friday, October 20th, 1950.
Memorandum;
No mail yesterday, and not so much today, but from the enclosure, which I got around to read rather late this evening was in the nature of a surprise.

The day had started off alright with a good workout at Arenbourg early this morning. But from then on it was one great big carryings-on, and I was frankly tired before I got to the mail.

The Henrys had Ohio guests whom they wanted me to take under their or rather my wing. Before I was finished, the morning was, too.

And no sooner was dinner done than Mesdames Clotilde and Julie Prudhomme of Natchitoches bounced some rather nice people, - the Cunninghams, of all names, into my lap, -- from Evanston, Illinois. And in the midst of that Mrs. Coombs passed by to inquire if she might do anything for me, and she might, in putting some little liver people on the most favored Welfare list. And then came some friends of the Rands, and the next thing I knew darkness was heading in.

But before continuing this harangue on the present subject, I don't want to fail again in thanking you for your kindness in your recent letter, offering to secure some small snapshots for me other than those you have already offered covering the Chapel. I could use one or two subjects of which you already may have films. A case in point, for example, demonstrating the possible use of an occasional snapshot in ordinary size, is the request for such from the Central Louisiana Historical Association which is about to bring out post-cards of historic places in this area. They have passed this way with a view to taking pictures but the photographer, whom I chanced to know, isn't so good, and as the weather was unfavorable on the day he came, it seemed to me better if we supplied the pictures. I have to cast about so long to get anything out of Harry Smith that if you should chance to have a few films that could be printed within the month, that would be fine. I think it would be nice to have several subjects, including you and the Gobelins, if you don't mind, and they can select what they please.

4475

There was some kind of a frolic going on next door which I not only declined attending, but honestly forgot to convey an invitation to Carolyn and Helen when they finally reached here between 9 and 10. Just why anybody should want to attend, or assume any one, after a trip of several hundred miles want to attend such a business I cannot imagine. As for myself, I have been so sleepy all evening I'm afraid I haven't been much of a host, and so I skipped discussion of the Pilgrim article and shall take that up in the morning. It is interesting that Helen's suggestions are precisely along the lines you suggested. I am hoping we can stave off people long enough to pry open some of the sentences and paragraphs to pour in a few bits of historical data, and thus rigged, the thing may get by some Editor's desk.

While awaiting their arrival, I dashed in my chair while reading from "In Search of a Future" by Morris or possible Maurice Hindus. It has to do with a subject which never intrigued me much, but the book is written in such a manner that I find myself enjoying the survey it makes of life in such countries as Iran, Iraq, Palestine and Turkey. The picture the author paints of the immediate future of all except Israel is gloomy enough. While all kinds of reforms are needed, he makes it plain that the vast ignorance obtaining in the Mohammedan countries makes even an attempt to start things in the opposite direction an almost impossible job.

I was struck by an example cited by the author of the regression of the inhabitants of the Tigris-uprates Valley. He remarks that in the museum at Persepolis there is an iron ploughshare, used by farmers 2,600 years ago when that valley was one of greatest productivity. Today the fields in the same place are being ploughed with a stick that sometimes has an iron point on it, stirring the ground not at all, and producing such a meager crop that whether it is destroyed or not before reaching maturity doesn't seem to make so very much difference.

Well, so much for a "literary evening". The Weather Man, in spite of mid-night stars, says there will be variable cloudiness and scattered showers for the impending 24 hour period. I certainly hope the variation includes a few gleams of sunshine, for an imposing battery of cameras are here and ought to secure a flock of interesting shots, - weather cooperating.

And so I fold, beaming with anticipation for Sunday when I hope it rains all day, drowning out all thought of pilgrims and providing me with hours of interrupted labor on this keyboard.....

4476

4476 about Helen's & Carolyn's visit.
King Solomon 10/16/50

Sunday, October 22nd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice, -- just to be alone and able to relax and chat a little after a busy week end.

The weather for the most part was not cooperative, what with much cloudiness, considerable foginess and a few sprinkles. But all in all, I think this was just as well, for it enforced a measure of rest on the Texas numbers, and I think they needed it. It seems that the Time-Herald has been moving of late, and I can imagine nobody knows better than you yourself as to what that means, what with the number of times you have had to undergo that ordeal. That, undoubtedly, accounts for the prolonged silence from Helen, and it seems that the special crate containing her personal papers, including the Pilgrimage article, was somehow misplaced in all the excitement, and hasn't turned up as yet. I reckon she was hoping against hope, as I have done on occasion, that the thing might turn up before she wrote reporting its temporary absence, and so the days slipped by, - busy days, I imagine, and she looked terribly tired on reaching here.

As the cloud coverage precluded picture-taking on Saturday morning, I sent them a message, recommending that remain in the bed, - which they did, until 11.

Deborah with a Miss Helm arrived here at 1:45, and after saying howdy to them, Carolyn and Helen retired again, while I had a session with the Baton Rouge numbers, who were followed by some other people. I was sorry the cloudiness continued for the balance of the day, but I am always glad when people can get caught up on rest, - and of course, when I was done with my pilgrims, I made the most of the freedom that was mine.

This morning the weather continued hazy, but everybody was astir by 7:30, and in spite of somewhat boggy roads, being newly graded, we made it to Little River. A big old willow had snapped off like a splintered pencil just at the end of the little foot bridge crossing the bayou to St. Mary's, but by some miracle of arrangement, there was just the right opening among the branches to get a couple of good perspectives of the Church, and then, as thought to assist in the business, the clouds thinned and the sun almost shined for a few minutes. But that was enough, and I believe

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Caryony got some good likenesses of our favorite negro Church.

Between 10 and 11, the girls had headed back for Texas and so I dined across the fence and was glad to hear such pleasant reports from Celeste and J. A. about their Saturday evening, for the girls had accepted their invitation for 8 o'clock last night, although I declined, and it seems they had a pleasant sitting. They passed this way afterward for a little chat covering half a dozen points, and I dictated a young article about the African House and Marie Therese before calling it a day.

The uncertain weather this afternoon must have contributed to the discouragement of road running, - or perhaps everyone on wheels was going to the State Fair in Shreveport. Be that as it may, I didn't have any white pilgrims, and the Rands n never came to their camp this week end. The Reverend Pompey M. Gillie came by this afternoon, saying there will be a special meeting at St. Augustine's Church on Little River on November 18th, with several groups of boys for special songs, and asking me if I would care to be their guest, and if I should care to do so, a talk on my part would please them. I half agreed. I should like to hear the singing and be with my friends, but 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is not a very good hour for me, what with the thing probably lasting three or four hours. Perhaps I shall see the Reverend when I go with the Rands to the movies on Wednesday night, and shall arrange to attend the Sunday business later in the afternoon when the middle of November arrives.

Helen and her husband, Lucile and hers and somebody else are converging on Carolyn's Old Bonita Ranch on the 18th of November, too, and I am to let them know later if I shall put in an appearance. Something tells me that if I go anywhere, Little River will be more to my speed and range, but it will be time enough to acquaint the ladies with that detail sometime between now and then.

I seem to have misplaced a letter from Mrs. Holloman in Saturday's post. I had written her asking about the Swan article to which she responded that although the Digest had told her she would be sent a copy on publication date, she has never heard from them. There was also an envelope in Saturday's post, containing small prints of the pictures taken here two weeks ago. I have lined out the extraneous edges and returned the prints to him for enlargement. The one of Grandpa trying to scale the boudoir bars turned out fine. I'll forward them with captions as soon as they come to hand. And so I fold, hoping you had a nice week end.

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re: J. Celeste
a Beth Cloutier

Monday, October 23rd, 1950.
Memorandum:

How elegant is today's post.....how elegant always is one whose head and heart contrives to make it so.....

Two envelopes from Manhattan, the one containing the Chapel likenesses, the other containing a treasure house of nice things as sketched by your typewriter. I have explored the contents of the letter, and am awaiting a second meandering secretary to continue with the balance. It is so grand,--all these things we are stirring up together.

But first off let me hasten to answer one or two of your questions while fresh on my mind. Months ago I should have said Yes to your inquiry about using the Henry Chambers material, - Yes, by all means, and a cluster of oak leaves for your keenness in selecting them. For the life of me I can't remember if Henry Chambers is alive or dead. If dead, we can go slap ahead without giving the use of the things further thought. If still alive, I shall, of course, have to request permission. But I shall determine which is the case, and shall advise you shortly regarding the matter.

You ask about writing Beth Cloutier and Celeste. It is alright to mention anything coming to mind about our mutual efforts regarding the Scrapbook. Long since have I told J. A. and Celeste you are doing all the work, so any mention made in regards to our mutual efforts will be no news to them. In their minds, you are so much more a part of the Madam's patronage of the Arts and History that no thought would ever arise in their minds as to what you and I might be using as materials for cooking up our brews, and since everything is left to us and as the treasures are in our custody, no reference is ever made to any of the individual items. It isn't very flattering to realize they don't care to worry about such details, but it is heartening to know at the same time that the confidence is such and so complete that no thought regarding them needs ever arise. I have always quite blandly pushed the stuff over the Post Office counter, and because I push it and because you are the addressee, that is all that matters.

And as for Beth, you can make any reference to anything you please. Although not positive, still I think she never was able to get a copy of the delightful likenesses of M. et Mme. Narcisse Fru d'homme, and I know she is going to be perfectly enchanted. It is such a pity she never writes, -- she looses so much by not doing so. Her personality for some people is almost as difficult as that of Sister's, but this el gant gesture on your part will be a blessing that will both surprise and delight her, I feel certain, and whether she acknowledges it or not, it will rank as another star in your crown by the Recorder of all good deeds.

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I wish my second secretary would hurry up and put in an appearance. I am so anxious to run through all the interesting things you so nobly transmitted for my inspection, and for possible sharing with Friend Postell, I. S. Willard and so on. I think the Frudhomme particulars may be of the greatest interest to Postell, - epitaphs, etc., and they may well assist us in our enterprise of turning out an eventual may of the Cane River plantations. I am always being impressed by the unexpected bearing some seemingly unrelated fact, such as particulars on a tombstone may have on determining something like the location of a plantation residence, or some such. The mere statement of such a thing sounds ridiculous, and yet see how curiously things unrolled from Georgetown when the lady up yonder chanced to stumble across the name Yucca on the slip of paper about the narcissus bulbs.

And speaking of Friend Postell and the plantation map, I am reminded that early yesterday morning when the Texas ladies were being shown certain foundations of old forgotten mansions in this area, I mentioned the map that was in the process of being drawn. They both were tremendously interested and suggested that if I cared to have the thing effected, they could eventually take over the map and photograph it in sections, blowing up each individual piece into imposing proportions, and so bring forth a glorified item that might be suitable for a decorative screen or a wall hanging, as large as the Cane River Gobelin at least. Don't you think that might be a nice item for eventual incorporation in some such place as the library at Arenbourg or some such.

I must punch Friend Postell a little, and thanks to your thoughtfulness in providing me with a stick, I shall use the epitaphs as the stick with which to prod.

I had to laugh about your account of the mix up with the bulbs. You are what the late Mrs. Cammie G. Henry of Melrose might style a sight! The rain we had last week made the bulb things in this neighborhood jump and already most of them are two or three inches high. And every time I see them, I shall be thinking of you "hoovering" over your bulb garden like a Mother hen with her baby chicks, and let us hope that in spite of their new environment, the chicks will flourish mightily.

Monday got started off on the wrong foot, what with the Gasquets from Baton Rouge arriving just after I had returned from Arenbourg this morning. Gasquet is something or other for the State Government and does a heap of photographing and has been here often before. I think he must have been doing pecane stuff today. His wife who is quite intelligent, wanted to spend some time with me in the library. She is nice but her presence was no help in getting other things to going in the direction we would have them on this Underwood. They remained for dinner and so things turned.

I am so glad to you you are going to take anti-influenza shots. Don't forget to take a few "shots" of rest.

1844

4480 Mrs. Baker - 70 W. State College
10/19/50
King Solomon 10/19/50

Tuesday, October 24th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Pure Indian Summer, all blue and gold during the day, all blue and silver at night. At the present moment, the moon as big and bright as a shiney new dish pan, is climbing over the African House, and as I glance toward the sun dial that snowy column gives the impression of moving ever so much closer in my direction as the dark bamboo hedge retreats in the opposite direction behind.

I can't lay my today's procrastination on the weather or on pilgrims, for there weren't many, but rather on a wandering mind that too often, I fear, led me far afield from the keyboard that waited expectantly before me most of the day. But somehow a hundred little things impelled me to turn my thoughts Manhattanward so often, and it was such a pleasant sensation, I indulged myself in it considerably.

I thought of you when the post arrived, for example, for while it was all 2nd class, there was a package that recalled you to mind, what with the book in the package containing paper markers between the pages, just as you so thoughtfully arrange them for me time, time and again. The book was from Georgetown and entitled "The Art of Botanical Illustration" by Wilfred Blunt or some such name. In the front "me" had written "For Francois because of pages so and so and so and so...." and when I noticed the little paper markers I discovered my thoughts weren't in the direction of Connecticut but New York.

I have some of those little old Insel books of the former 25 cent variety around somewhere, and I shall bounce them in the Georgetown direction in acknowledgement in a day or two, for while the text will probably not contain any references to Parrish family connections, still there will be flowers and trees depicted, and perhaps that will entertain the lady, don't you think so.

But before I leave the subject of the post, I should remark that Monday's Memo was not mailed until Tuesday, for the unpredictable post rider did a Paul Revere on Monday, putting in an appearance and disappearance two hours earlier than schedule instead of five hour behind. I mention this in order you may understand the apparant skip in the usual arrival of things.

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But before leaving the subject of the mail, I want to say again how much I appreciate your Monday's offerings, and how entranced I am to have the reproductions of the Chapel to hand. I have already sent out several, and shall be sending more later. I thought Miss Nellie should have one, for any little suggestion from the outside world seems to entertain her as she sits a little ruefully off there in Atlanta. And I sent one to Helen, explaining to her it was merely a prod at Carolyn to hurry up with the photographs she took of St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou on Sunday. Then I thought one should go to that Mrs. Davis of Kansas City who had sent the contribution toward the Station of the Cross thing we are contemplating. And so your kindness spatters in all directions, bringing enchantment all over the place and withal so unexpectedly in so many quarters.

Dr. Rand telephoned me this evening, asking me to dine with them at the camp tomorrow night along about sun down, after which we shall go up the road to St. Mathew's where the baptising pictures will be shown.

And that reminds me that according to the Rev. Gillie whose Church St. Mathew's is not, that St. Mathew's feel constrained to rig-up their church with repairs and with paint because it stands near Dr. Knipmeyer's clinic and St. Mathew's public school, both of the latter being newly done over and touched up with Sherwin and Williams' finest. I guess "keeping up with the Joneses" is as good a reason for doing over St. Mathews as any other reason, at the same time, I guess I like St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou because the ladies keep the pulpit lace curtains starched up to a point of cracking in attempting to keep up with nobody but their own impulses.

OK. From the typed enclosure from Mrs. Baker, I find one paragraph, - the one about Melrose versus Natchez as a point of pilgrimage, that I should, perhaps, have inserted in the Latham letter, but since I didn't, it is one to keep in mind when other letters on the same subject are written. The point is that the Scrapbook is the only book of its type in the lower Mississippi Valley which concentrates through the medium of a single pictorial and written record, on the way of life in the Old South, -- not a vast survey of a multitude of different plantation houses, but a concrete example of the whole subject through the medium of one of its best surviving types. Never, do I recall, have I written such a chaotic sentence or paragraph, but in spite of the clumsy expression, I trust you can grasp the general idea. As confessed above, my efforts at composition aren't much today, but the sentiments, although hodge-podge, are much to my satisfaction.....

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Jules Lion

River Series in
pictures.

- old maps &
historical data

Wednesday, October 25th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A good day and a busy one and best of all a happy one, thanks to the arrival of your two grand numbers as of Saturday last past and Monday's air mail, advising of the receipt of the photographs.

I have about a billion things to talk about, and so shall merely touch on one or two things probably at this sitting.

First off, I must take time out to pin several oak leaf clusters on your person for all the particulars about Jules Lyon. Were you here, we should be seated on the gallery, drenched in moonlight, comparing notes on a dozen different subjects all at once, and trying to figure out such extraneous points as to how it is possible that the Metropolitan Museum is pretty much in the dark about J. Lyon while down 5th Avenue some 40 odd blocks there are treasures about him buried in the N. Y. P. Library which you have brought to light. Odd, isn't it, and the more for me to wonder at your splendid achievements.

Surely something should be done about Jules Lyon, for, if as is surmised, he is a native of Louisiana, he is certainly the State's most distinguished artist, and not even its museums know anything about him and its artists have never heard his name. There's so much to be attended to, even for those ladies whose lives are nothing but one great big game of cards after another.

And tanks much for mentioning the Prudhomme letters which starts me to thinking in half a dozen different directions all at once.

I am convinced, as of the present writing at least, that we ought to hold them for a Cane River book, but that is a thought merely and I probably could be persuaded otherwise. Off hand, however, it seems to me that the Melrose Scrapbook is going to be the better if it sticks pretty close to Melrose, and in view of all the photographs we have in mind to use, I reckon it is better to concentrate the pictures on Melrose exclusively, and as they will take the place of much printed material that would go into a book with less photographic material, it seems to me better for us to hold the Prudhomme letter, etc., for the Cane River opus.

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I find myself already thinking it wouldn't be a bad idea to start a second folio along since the Scrapbook one, into which might be placed likely material for the Cane River item, so that by the time we have written "Finis" on the Cane River one, the Melrose one, the Cane River one will be well under way.

And another thought struck me as I read your account of the Prudhomme letters, - having little to do with them, and yet brought to the surface by what you had to say about their use; -

Isn't it possible that the publishers of The River Series could do a fine stroke of business by issuing a River Series in pictures.

How does the idea strike you.

I don't have in mind using the same identical rivers for photographic presentation as appeared in print for exclusively, but some of those titles might well be employed. For example, the Lower Mississippi that Herr Carter did would be one type of thing, but supposing another Lower Mississippi River in Photographs should be brought out, not only including a lot of stuff like the Laughlin Ghost book but also reproducing one of the 1850 maps of all the plantations along the river, business about steamboats included, particulars from the pen of the early explorers, Civil War doings from the Gulf to Vicksburg and so on. I think it could be wonderful.

And then in the same series might be included Forgotten Rivers in a series and in this group I should love to join you in having a go at such ones as Cane River in scrapbook style, and St. Catherine's, which still puzzles me as to why it was never included in the original River Series publications. Perhaps it was omitted because nobody ever heard of St. Catherine's, which drains all the Adams County plantations.

Somewhere along this stream a dozentales could be spun that ought to lend themselves nicely to set off the illustrations. You know St. Catherine's for example, flows slap along the front of Foster's Mound where the Slave Princess spent his American interlude of a life time. The old town of Washington, Miss., is also on its margin and I wish we had Miss Nellie's history of that place.

Well, Lord, how much there is to contemplate and understake. The Howard Memorial librarian, Mr. B. is dead. Robert Usher succeeded him, and now he is gone but I know Mrs. Usher and shall get in touch with her on the Lyon business. Thanks for such a lovely day.....

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Notes at St. Matthews
Mrs. Davis 10/19/50
Quotation from A. France.
James M. Cain 10/19/50 Page 2
R.D. 10/19/50
Essie Mae Culver 10/19/50

Thursday, October 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

One of the warmest days on record for this time of the year, --thermometer around 90, -- with a promise for continued hot weather straight ahead.

The mail was fairly heavy today, and I shall enclose one or two items herewith, or under separate cover. I would invite your attention particularly to the Davis item. You will notice I have checked a quotation from Anatole France on the first page. Because of the bulk of stuff to hand, this letter was skimmed through speedily, but as we whizzed through it, I was struck by the appropriateness of the idea expressed, as being suitable, possibly, for occupying a page by itself as presenting the best possible reason for publishing our opus about the Madam and Melrose.

If you will give the thing a once over with this thought in mind, --acting according to your own reaction, either by setting it down on a page by itself, --or, if not suitable, ignoring it completely, and either way will suit me just fine.

In yesterday's Memor, I got to going at such reckless speed about one thing or another that I found myself at the foot of the page before I had so much as mentioned any doings of the day, and I did want to touch on the movies at St. Matthews.

Dr. Rand arrived at Melrose a little after 5 p.m. He called on J. H. who had had a couple of extractions and was demonstrating an inheritance from his mother, - inability to contend with physical pain, - a parallel surprisingly like hers, since like her, he can manage mental worries without the vaguest suggesting he has a thing on his mind, and yet when confronted by physical suffering, seems to crumple almost instantly before its on-slaught.

About sun down, Dr. Rand and I joined Blythe, the Gordon Randolphs and one Mrs. Bolton at the camp where we dined extravagantly. Perhaps by 7:30 or 8, we headed up the Bermuda Road where at St. Matthews, we found two or three hundred negroes awaiting our arrival.

The evening was a great success, and everything in perfect harmony for the Baptisin' Pictures being show. The meeting, - mind you for a movie, was opened by the Revend Pompey M. Gillie, who with mighty support from the congregation, surged forth a long hymn or chant or whatever that ran along uninterruptedly for at least 10 minutes. I couldn't detect a single word, but the

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rythme was wonderful and the volume both fulsome and impressive. At its conclusion, the preacher led us all in saying The Lord's Prayer. I have said the Lord's Prayer several times in my life, but never did I stumble around with it as I did in this instance. For I reckon the Reverend knew his business and probably he knew full well that most of his congregation could not manage more than two words at a time, - a whole phrase being too extended for their memory. And so he said: "Our Father", and we said: "Our Father" and he said: "Who art" and we said: "Who art", and he said: "in heaven" and we said: "In heaven", which went along alright, except for me, sitting in an arm chair up in front, confused things by forgetting to stop after each second word. But then when he reached "come, Thy", it seemed like a curious combination of words, what with two distinctly different phrases involved, - but the congregation was repeating words and not ideas, and so, in spite of my mix ups, everybody else got along alright.

After the prayer the meeting was turned over to Dr. Rand, who made an effective statement: "Lights out", and immediately the show got under way. With the hymn-chant and the Lord's Prayer going before, the mood had been perfectly established for the baptising pictures, of course, and so the evening spun along, and the reaction was gleeful and spilling over with merriment, and at the conclusion of the picture, two Reverends, - Gillie and one McHenry spoke words of appreciation and to back up the sentiments expressed, offered Dr. Rand the receipts totaling \$45.00. Dr. Rand responded appropriately and of course declined the purse, and so the whole evening was brought to a close much to everyone's satisfaction.

We drove back to the Rand camp where we sat beneath "our" cedar for a pleasant hour. Lundy and Zelma served delicious sandwiches and tall goblets of spiked fruit punch. A full moon cast patterns of silver and black across the country side, and save for some remote honking of geese far up the river beyond Arenbourg, the only sound was the organ music of Jesse Crawford whose rendition of "In A Monestary Garden" issued forth from the gramophone plugged in to the old cedar. There was an occasional exchange of thought, but only occasionally, and it was ever so pleasant just to dream away a pleasant hour under such delightful circumstances. I scarcely need suggest in which direction my thoughts were traveling, although somehow, I must confess, it didn't seem to me that they had to travel beyond the adjoining space on the bench beside me, what with "our" cedar over head, a balmy night breeze, the lovely music and all, I never felt more completely in touch with all that matters most.

From the Shreveport enclosure, I take it we may be expecting little Miss Lillian's gardening article shortly, which is all to the good, of course, and I shall respond to Essae Mae that we shall require the labors of her pen on the third Monday or the ensuing month, don't you think so.....

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Friday, October 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your air mail in today's post.

What a coincidence that just as we start talking about the Danish physician, the metropolitan papers would horn in on the same tune.

Shreveport Times

And thanks for sending a transcript of the obituary. I shall run through it again within a day or two, making one or two recommendations, perhaps, such as omission of one line about funeral plans, and correcting the unimportant error, - that Pat (Joe M. Henry Jr.) was a resident of Natchitoches. In 1948 Pat was going to school at U. S. U., and his legal residence was there or at Melrose, but certainly not at Natchitoches.

It is rather remarkable, I think, that this is the first time I had read the obituary. One insignificant detail is the date of the Madam's birth which is given as 1871. So far as any one knows, that is correct, but none of us were ever quite sure about its exactness. Sometimes the Madam used to indicate she was born in '71, and sometimes in '72. J. H. spoke to me of this matter a short time after her death, pointing out that considerable confusion had arisen from time to time in legal matters, hinging on this matter. I recall in particular one insurance policy, -- perhaps it was hers, perhaps someone else's, which went into quite a tangle, with payment refused because the mathematically and legally minded moguls of the insurance company would not admit that the Cammie G. Henry might be the same person who in one place as born in '71 and the other in '72.

So far as J. H. and I were concerned, we decided that whenever the question arose in the future, - and it wasn't likely to arise, we would always say she was born in 1872, and I selected that magical number for no other reason than the fact that 1872 - 1948 seemed to suggest a neat evenness and numerical harmony that the odd '71 did not possess. What a way to determine anybody's birthday!

There seems to be vast doings about the plantation tonight, with one party going on at the camp behind Fugabou's house, and

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Celeste having a flock of people at her house, including several Reverend Fathers, and Joe and Juanita likely to make their bow momentarily. Pat came home for the week end, arriving in time for supper and Paynie was all over the place, as he always is when members of the family are scheduled to be here for the week end. Paynie should be moving quietly to keep his blood pressure down, but although the most 5 cent of all the cigars, he invariably takes on the mannerisms of a mother hen fussing about for food for the baby chicks, and he usually ends up by disregarding preparations made by others and descends on the place with tons of food that isn't needed or wanted.

A case in point transpired a year or so ago when the S. G. Henrys passed this way for supper. A turkey had been roasted and a flock of pork chops had been fried. As I recall there were six or seven in the midst of supper when Paynie arrived but belatedly, followed by two dusky helpers who were lugging a huge dish pan heaped up to the spilling point with fried chicken, not a drumstick of which was ever touched. I haven't the slightest notion as to how many chickens are required to fill a huge dish pan, but unquestionably a heap more than were required under the circumstances.

The weather bureau predicts fair weather straight ahead, so I assume we shall have pilgrims over the week end, but I have nothing definite on the docket, and am hoping to get quite a bit of time to work uninterrupted. I feel inordinately noble for resisting the impulse to read a half dozen books which have come to hand in the last few days, but I am leaving them unopened until a headache or some such impells me to collapse for a while. At night I try to do a bit of radio listening but it seems to me I am forever falling asleep before I get more than a station identification.

For a long time I have been curious to read Dostievski's Crime and Punishment, what with my vast enthusiasm for his Brothers Karamazov. I notice among other things arriving from the New Orleans Public is a somewhat bulky collection of records bearing Dostievski's authorship, but entitled "House of the Dead", which I assume may be another title for the Crime and Punishment opus.

There seem to be quite a few British recordings coming to hand of late, and most of these are interestingly done but none of their readers exceed A. Scourby in perfection. An annoying usage employed in British recordings is the phrase at the end of each page: - "Recorded for the sole use of the blind". I find this inordinately stupid, being thus constantly repeated, for it is at once distracting and an unnecessary reminder, and I shall fire a broadside in that direction shortly. And so things turn, and your letter made my day but perfect.....

4488

Joe Henry - a small uncle Israel

Dora 10/26

Sunday, October 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

To hand in Saturday's post your grand letter, together with all enclosures, including the clipping about the death of Madam S., which I return herewith, thinking you might want to return it to your clippings.

And what a letter, every line of which entranced and enchanted me.

I shall never cease to marvel at the brightness of your eyes, for what person ever born would have discovered old Birgham Young's granddaughter but you.

Naturally I rolled on the floor at all you had to tell me about your search for particulars about the bidet in the New York Public Library. Everything you reported sounded to elegant and hilarious, and particularly the sofa contrived into a tub or some such. I have always considered the 18th century remarkable, but never did I have the slightest notion that it had really become so enlightened as your research revealed. I shall be consumed with impatience until you have regaled me further with the results of your explorations.

It goes without saying that I am delighted you like the pictures. Your arrangement of the portraits of the mulattoes will be perfect. I have never seen any portraits of mulattoes used in any type of book, although it would seem as though there must have been some. Be that as it may, whether these be the first or not, it strikes me they are likely to be about the finest one is likely to find anywaywhere, and it seems to me that when coupled with the article about Cane River mulattoes, they ought to captivate anyatham stumbling over them.

It probably seems odd to you, but I never think of the people in the portraits as anything but human beings and never as belonging to one race or another. And for this reason the question arises in my mind as to whether I indicated in each caption that the individual is a mulatto. I suppose I did, but I mention it, just in case you care to keep the point in mind as you run through the individual captions.

I'm am naturally delighted that you, too, like the picture of Madame, Lyle and Benny Roque. There is somehow an 1870 classicism about the figure of the lady and the face of her son that is quite remarkable, I think.

2814

4489

At the top of the other side of this page I wrote Joe's name and Uncle Israel's. Joe Henry came to visit with me yesterday and saw the photograph of Uncle Israel here on my desk before me. He was crazy about it and wondered if he could get a copy about half its size. - I suppose something like 5 by 7 or some such. If you should run across the film sometime and could have it "struck" for him, it would be ever so appreciated. Joe, I might add, is entranced with the enlargements you had made. - I showed him nothing else save those enlargements. He asked me if I would like to use a picture of Lyle and I said I would. I have only one in formal pose, but he says he has one of Lyle feeding the chickens which is very gay and he is going to send it along. I think it might be just the thing to use in the Yucca section.

Joe's interest in books and in Melrose is more like his Mother's than anyone's, and while there is opposition from some of the younger offspring about doing anything for the place, Joe is hand in glove with J. A. about doing things to preserve the place. He is entranced at the prospect of the book, of course.

And before leaving the subject of pictures, I think your idea of having the end papers photographed is excellent. Somehow the idea hadn't occurred to me as to how it might photograph. In the event it turns out nicely, I should be glad to have some small ones the size of the Chapel. Eventually such a tiny reproduction might make excellent advertisement if slipped into a letter now and then to people writing in this direction. It occurs to me, too, that it might turn out nicely on a post card later, when I send the pictures to the Central Louisiana Historical Society for that purpose.

I am hoping the Smith photographs, taken two weeks ago, may come to hand within the next day or two. One of them has a caption that requires a little research if I succeed in getting it rigged up the way I want it. --the one showing the canon used in the Colfax riots. Circumstances permitting, I shall write the captions before the pictures arrive, so I can attach them and get them headed in your direction without delay.

I shall also send along other data, including the larger part of the Melrose Time-Table. I am hoping against hope that by some miracle I may get a rainy day shortly, and that may enable me to secure assistance to run through some of these things before posting them. But in case I don't, they still can be submitted with the photographs to form the basis of discussion as to treatment of the book as a complete entity and the individual items by themselves. At the moment I am wondering if the captions can be used in their entirety, or if they will have to be enlarged or cut down. Your letter was grand, - more about it on the morrow...

4490 Mrs. D. L. 10/30/50

Monday, October 30th, 1950.

Memorandum:

In today's post came the Negro Digest, and thank you much. I am wondering if Mrs. Holloman ever heard from the publishers. Naturally I turned through the magazine immediately to note the layout. It seems to be alright, although by some miracle of printing they have the Black Swan facing in the opposite direction from her pose in the original, which makes it seem odd at first. I have so long been accustomed to seeing her the other way.

I am hoping eventually to get a look at some of the other material in the same issue, but the little time I had today with my secretary was all devoted to correcting the Children of Stranger's article which will go forward with correction either in the next out-going post, or the following one.

But definitely not for publication, but with equal definiteness for your delectation, I am sending along the unbelievably bad business which came to hand today from Kate Perkins. I had rather supposed she might do something quite nice by way of a Currier and Ives sort of impression of the Melrose she knew in 1905, the personality of the "adam" in her first years on this plantation and something unique by way of the personality that was to identify itself so intimately with the Cane River country in the years that followed. And it is well, obviously, that we didn't count on this thing too much, for it is so dreadfully bad that nothing can be done to save it.

I shall write Miss Kate tonight, thanking her for her efforts and expressing the hope that the Editor doesn't do too many bad things with his blue pencil when he begins going over the material which will eventually be submitted from people such as herself and Caroline and Adolph and Mrs. Wagner, and la belle Richell and so on. That ought to leave an opening for all omissions when publication is finally effected and perhaps, out of kindness to Miss Kate, I ought to throw in a few extra names as probable contributors just so she will not feel quite so lonely when her material doesn't find its way to print.

Among the names I might throw in to give Miss Kate company, of course, will be Ruth Cross whose card I am enclosing with Miss Kate's contribution. I laugh when I stop to think how Ruth Mountain labored and brought forth a postcard mouse. It certainly took her long enough to squeeze out one little penny postcard, - July through October,

0011

4491

and if it takes her that long to say she hasn't any of the "Madam's" letters, how long, do you suppose, we might have to wait for her to stir up a symposium on any old subject.

I find my thoughts turning in the direction of little Miss Alberta tonight. I am quite alone what with J. H. in New Orleans, Celeste and Madam Regard in Mansura and the rest of the Henrys scattered heaven alone knows where. So often when at Melrose, Miss Alberta is wont to ask me, and with much feeling:

"Aren't you frightened to stay alone way off there by yourself at night."

Sweet Alberta Ben Bolt, and how Log and Carolyn and Helen laughed when Log was helping take their duffle into the big house Friday night a week ago, and I showed them the New Orleans bolts Miss A. had installed and repeated her explanation that any of those little 17 year old boys, if they thought you had 85 cents would more than likely murder you for it. Log liked that one particularly and immediately be-moaned that he had passed beyond the 17 year old group.

Did I mention above that Mrs. Holloman telephoned me along about first dark tonight. She was in Watchitoches, doing some work with Mrs. Cooper, -- Huey P.'s sister, -- some newspaper stuff about some kind of a beautification week or some such the town seems to be putting on. She threatened to honor me with a visit shortly, but I told her I was "full-up" for the next several weeks.

I think I came to the foot of the page last night before mentioning that Dr. Rand dropped by to see me for a couple of hours in the afternoon. He asked me if I knew any colored person in the Parish who has been in an Alexandria Hospital with a broken back for a time. I didn't. Dr. Rand had been told by an Alexandria physician about the man on Sunday morning, -- the subject coming up when Dr. Rand had remarked he was coming up Cane River way for dinner at the camp. While on his way up here, it occurred to Dr. Rand that if the man is acquainted with some of the people in the baptising film, he might enjoy seeing it, and my thought about the matter was that the man would enjoy the break in the monotony of his prolonged hospitalization with any old film, and doubly so for one in which his own race figured. And so Dr. Rand is going to convert the hospital ward into a movie theatre one of these evenings, and I must say I think it is a remarkable thing when a person so busy and with indifferent strength will go to so much trouble to entertain the poor negro whose identity is completely unknown to him. There are so many kind people in the world if one only has the luck to encounter them.

Just before she left, Celeste told me she contemplated going up Briarwood way on Monday, -- a week hence, -- in the afternoon. I think I shall have her drive me to see the sisters Dormon, so that, armed with a stick, I can give Caroline a few punches, don't you think so.....

0011

4492 R.D. 10/27

*Memo for Historical Society
about H. Kane - Jeanne Dougherty*

Tuesday, October 31st, 1950.

Memorandum:

"Un coup d'oeil sure Beloeil" -- "Un coin de Melrose sur le Concourse

How perfectly enchanting and how glad my heart has been ever since the morning's post arrived.

"Plein de charme partout", -- and I simply must re-read the account of Peter Illyovitch's visit in Florence to the drawing room of Madame von Weck while the latter was out for a drive. For now at long last I feel I can understand perfectly how much it means to live in one's mind in the surroundings of one's better self, sensing forever the intimacy that goes along with a perfect comprehension of the surroundings which, in reality, are so much a part of the individual with whom a life time is shared, even though direct contact, seemingly remote to others, is actually omnipresent.

And I gasp a little as I consider the actualities, -- the veritable corner of Cane River you have so marvelously created, and the whole business open and above board for any passer by to view, and yet so marvelously clothed that the casual and unobservant glances at it a dozen times a week, never once sensing in the lovely lay-out a marvelous segment of Paradise, reserved exclusively for only those like the girl friend, who have eyes to see.

I need not go into details regarding my opinion of the creator of all this magic, for those ideas are already too well known. But I do want to say how extravagantly I admire these souvenirs of a way of life that is so perfectly executed that my own days are made the happier because of the realization they bring me of the exquisite artistry another has summoned up to make a remote corner in a hurly-burly civilization so pleasantly remote and beautiful.

I scarcely need add that these lovely remembrances of the 26th will find a place along side some other treasured items, Greenwood, the Cloisters, South of the border and beneath the Goblin, -- pages from the book of life of yesterday, today and tomorrow which nightly I like to turn through as I sit in my corner, reading by machine and absorbing along with the spoken words the pictures which will forever mean so much to me.

And in the same post comes the transcripts which I shall run through at a subsequent sitting. Thanks so much for touching on

SEAM

4493

these in your Saturday letter and its post script.

You ask about what prints are desired for the Historical Society. If I might have one each of the small size, I shall send them all, with captions of two or three sentences, to the Society, for by providing the Society with such an extensive assortment, it is quite possible this bend of the river will receive a greater allotment of cards than will be printed for other sections which supply less subject matter. In the event you care to have a few extra small sized ones printed for me after the manner of the Chapel, I should be glad to have Yucca, the Sun Dial, the back gallery, a few more of the Chapel, the elegant one of the Big house with the oak and from the films of your own camera taken in June, a few of you with the Gobelin and one or two of me in the chair, for I think Miss Nellie and Rudolph might like one of the latter.

I think the exterior and interior of the African House would be good for the Historical Society, too. I am not sure about the quality of the several of the exterior of the African House already sent. It seems a difficult building to take successfully. I am rounding up a couple more exteriors of the African House which Helen or Carolyn took, and shall send them along shortly, leaving it to you to decide which likeness of all in your true hand seems to be the best.

I am so glad your experience with the influenza shot has been surmounted satisfactorily, and I am going to hold the thought it will ward off all kinds of things during the ensuing cold months. And thanks, too, for telling me about the arrangements of the moment that will not require a change of horses in mid stream. Let us hope that nagle may be maintained for ever so long until personal projects can be disposed of.

James Aswell telephoned me this morning to say he had just run across the article about "Zerline". I am enchanted with what you had to pass along about Deobra's rendition of the word, and how it summoned up a whole parade of delightful memories from the unexpected "on Giovanni" section. The aria is grand and henceforth will always be the more precious.

James says Colliere will shortly publish an article of his on the Louisiana Lottery. The madam used to talk so much about that business and how Governor Nichols eventually quashed it.

J. Aswell also had an old, old formula to run through. He said he was recently in New Orleans in the library, chatting with the head librarian and a Dr. Neurah who is engaged in doing a very notable study of John MacDonough. As they chatted, Barnett Lane breeze through the place, waving airily to James and speaking to him by name but ignoring the others. James asked them about this snub, and was told that Mr. Lane borrowed material from Dr. Neurah, appropriated the whole business, and rushing madly into print, incorporated much of Dr. Neurah's material into his own book, as though it were his. I take it Mr. Lane runs true to form. Again my thanks for another grand day. It will be so pleasant to read another page tonight....

*John
MacDonough*

SEAM

4494

*Mrs. R. B. Williams
10/28/50
Sept 1950*

*Rodin
Paris days*

Wednesday, November 1st, 1950.

Memorandum:

From the enclosures, you will note we may use the Chambers letters without further ado, for actually they don't belong to Mr. Chambers any more, -- not since 1929.

That's one point settled.

And so things run along, and imagine my surprise this afternoon after talking with James Aswell yesterday, they should both drop by for an hour or so this afternoon. I enjoy James' conversation, if he doesn't switch off on to sex, as he is inclined to do, and today he kept to the straight and narrow path without slipping but once.

I didn't hear any news of particular interest except that that Mrs. Geiger or whatever her name is who has the Basement Book Shop in New Orleans, and is a friend of Miss Alberta, works hand in glove with Arnett Lane and gets an extra rake of of an additional 10 per cent on all the books of his she gets rid of. I think that is an interesting point to keep in mind as time jogs along.

I heard five minutes of news this evening at 5:30, but as all the talk was about a couple of numb skulls who tried to shoot up Lafayette Square and Mr. Truman, not a peep was mentioned about George Bernard Shaw, so I take it the latter yet lingers on.

I am glad I read the biography of him, entitled "G. B. S." a couple of year back. I liked the book. Sometimes I thought Mr. Shaw paid too high a price for some of his effects, but he was always interesting and a force for the good in society generally, I think.

I suppose there will be much in the obituary department about him within the immediate future, and should you ever notice a reproduction of Rodin's bust of him, -- I should be glad if you would call my attention to it, for I have never seen it.

Perhaps Rodin kept it in his Paris residence which I never visited, but I thought it was executed at London, although perhaps it never remained on exhibition in either place. I used to go to the London studio rather frequently and

*Rodin's bust
of G. B. S.*

DEP

4495

I liked the place, but I never did see the playwright's bust during any of my visits.

The Meudon Studio, subsequently converted into a Museum, I believe, is a little nearer Paris, just above Meudon-Val Fleuri, than is the grand terrace of the Grand Dauphin where I used to like to spend much time. The view across the Seine is as excellent at this place as at Bellevue or St. Cloud or Marly, I suppose, but somehow there was always so many interesting things going on inside the Studio - never got around to view the landscape, and now I rather regret it.

I have intended for several days to thank you for your kindness in telling me of the exhibition you saw recently at the New York Public Library, - the negro items. Perhaps I did mention my appreciation, perhaps I didn't, but I did want to mention it again regardless, for it is so wonderful of you to keep me abreast with such matters which are always of the greatest interest to me.

I might as well confess my ignorance as to the divorce of F.D.R.'s daughter from her husband which somehow I had not heard about until the ex-hus and plummeted into heaven and the newspapers yesterday or the day before. Perhaps the radio never did much about the divorce, or perhaps I wasn't paying very good attention at the time, which must have been a year or more ago. Did Anna Roosevelt ever marry again, and does she continue to live in Seattle or where ever, or did she return to the East coast.

And another thing while I think of it, I shall be delighted if you will keep fresh in mind long conversations we are going to have in days to come concerning Schwabia, and should the press of time permit in between, I should be delighted if you would touch on that subject, should it occur to you when writing. Once in the late 1920's, I had a lovely old book made up exclusively of maps, published along about 1680 or 1690, an imposing business about the size of the Elephant edition of Audubon and 2 or 3 inches thick, with each map covering the entire page. There were some lovely ones of various sections of the Holy Roman Empire and some delightfully quaint ones of Schwabia, - little houses and castles and forests and people hunting and all sorts of things, and they were in color. I had to part with the item but I shall always have it in my memory and the Schwabia ones still are ever so vivid in my mind. I had planned to drag the thing along with me on a visit of exploration through that region one summer but a smash up in an automobile accident on the Place de la Concorde knocked that plan and my knee cap into smithereens, and so now I have the prospect of making an even better tour, thanks to your lighted lamp which will make the prospect a hundred times more delightful to me. How ridiculous disappointments become when view in retrospect if, as in this instance, the ultimate realization is so immeasurably more precious to anticipate.....

4496

Ann Keller 10/30
Nina 10/28

DEP

Thursday, November 2nd, 1950. '50.

Memorandum:

On the store gallery late today I met my old friend, the Reverend Jesse Davis, a Baptist preacher living just beyond St. Augustin's Church, across the river. He is on friendly terms with the neighboring priests, but doesn't discuss religion much with them, I believe.

When he saw me he said:

"I've been thinking about you since yesterday and wanting to ask your opinion about that latest business out of Rome. For a long time it has been seemin' to me that the Pope forgot all about God and Jesus in favor of the Virgin Mary. And now my radio say the Pope wants us to believe Mary made heave, body and soul, and all in one leap."

Jesse is a sight.

The 1950 cotton crop was finally harvested today. With this year's prices bringing the average bale to the value of about \$150.00, the 525 bales produced on Melrose, plus the demand for cotton seed, must run the gross figure to quite an imposing figure. Thursday is always inclined to be a little hurly-burly but in spite of the advent of the Knipmeyers, I managed to get in some work at Arenbourg this morning early-early. The radio had predicted rain for this afternoon and tonight, and it is pleasant to hear it cascading on the banana leaves along the gallery and to realize the Arenbourg children are quite prepared for it.

The Knipmeyers were going to Alexandria, after visiting me, to call on Miss Sally who has been in the hospital down there for a few weeks, - taking a rest cure. Next to Miss Sally's Magnolia plantation is the Cohen plantation, and one of the Cohen daughters-in-law is in the same hospital as Miss Sally, but quite a different department, having just begot herself a baby. From a nurse she learned some hospital news the other day and telephoned her husband's family to say that Miss Sally had just died. The Cohens immediately ordered an Alexandria florist to forward gobs of flowers to the hospital to accompany the body when removed to Magnolia. They mourned the loss of their neighbor until the mail arrived on the following day with a letter penned by the "corpse", thanking them for their lovely tribute. I reckon that must have been a jolt, wouldn't you reckon.

3844

4497

And speaking of jots, I just got one myself, for as I turned this page, I glanced in the direction of the sun dial in the White Garden when a flash of lightning surprisingly outlined George standing on the gallery, calmly drinking out of St. Giggins' Fountain. George, you may recall, the the Brahmin bull and while we are on the best of terms? I really had never invited him to a tea party on the Yucca gallery. How he got into the garden in the first place, only George knows, and what with the rain descending pretty briskly, he probably sought shelter here, having no parasol about his person. I think the rain will slacken shortly, for it has been coming and going at odd intervals all evening, and when it lets us, I shall go out and have a little chat with him, after which I shall grasp him firmly by the ear and lead him back to the outer world. I hope it continues to lighten until that chore has been accomplished. What a sight that ought to be, me leading George through the pitch blackness of a rain night, crashing through bushes and by some miracle, ending up at the right gate. I read a little last night before going to sleep. It was an all Russian evening, what with Tschaikowski's 1812 Overture as a starter, with a couple of pages from Dostievski's House of the Dead, followed by Lenine and the Russian Revolution by Hill or some such. I like Dostievski's style although his intimate account of prison life in Siberia in the 18th century was dolorous enough. The book about Lenine is well contrived and its survey of economic and social conditions in Russia just before the Revolution of 1917 seemed sound, and its economic survey illuminating. But Herdidi, however, what so many writers sympathetic to Lenine seem to have done regarding Lenine's trip from Switzerland through Germany in a sealed train to Russia in the Spring of 1917: - dismissing it with some such phrase as "People have suggested collusion between Lenine and the Kaiser in effecting this trip but there is no foundation whatsoever for such a supposition".

And that is where those favorable to Lenine always fall down in my estimation, for I never could understand how a Russian, this country at war with Germany, would be shipped through Germany in a sealed train, - sealed meaning no communication en route, I suppose, without Germany having a pretty good knowledge of what the trip was all about. Imperial Germany consorting with anybody like Lenine certainly makes "strange bed fellows", and yet I cannot imagine the German Government permitting Russian revolutionists to go sailing across the countryside in special trains without having the vaguest notion as to what was probably cooking. I assume biographers have felt it didn't look too well to present the Lenine crowd being patted on the head by the leaders of the country at war with Russia, especially as the Brest-Litov separate peace that followed the Russian revolution looked like fat payment by the Bolsheviks for that memorable train ride. But here I am at the foot of the page and George is patiently waiting.....half hour later. I made it alright and George is in the big road and I'm folding.....

CC44

4498 Anne Parrish 10/30
Overdyke 10/30

Friday, November 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your letter in today's post, and how nice of you to send along the additional epitaphs and the letters regarding perique tobacco.

You would have loved the nonchalance with which my secretary read the latter. It was obvious he was accustomed to hearing me use a word suggested by the adjective, for throughout he rattled along about the perruque tobacco. Don't you think that stacks up nicely along side Debora's rendition of "Aline".

You will enjoy turning through the Blunt flower book. That your interest in it should have impelled you to make inquiry regarding it recalls my original impulse to send along the copy to you, but I dismissed the idea when, on a second look, I discovered Anne had written my full name in the front, and I thought this extraneous business might make the item a little, -- shall we say, -- cumbersome. If it wouldn't, I should be delighted to send it along forthwith. Of course I have no idea as to the contents of the printed material which may or may not be interesting, but probably may well be. Just let me know if you should find it convenient to manage this item or if I should reserve it for the Arenbourg shelf, and I shall be delighted to accept your suggestions, understanding perfectly either way.

I am glad I sent along the little Inselts which I had enjoyed so much these past ten years, for I feel sure they are just the type of thing she would get much from, in view of her interest in doing decorative things with her paint pots. I am wondering why I never visited the church she mentions, - St. Gregory, the Moor. I should certainly like to see the little dark angel who sounds ever so gay.

You speak of the prolonged Indian Summer you have been enjoying. Ours came to an abrupt end this afternoon when the thermometer began tumbling alarmingly. I consulted the Weather Bureau and was advised it was likely to go down to the 30's before morning, which doesn't seem imaginable after the unending heat waves sweeping over us all during October. And so, just before dark, I hurriedly harvested the better half of my banana crop, hanging the bunches from the rafters of the Chapel. It was almost dark and supper had already been announced, so I just suspended them from any nails available, and fortunately there were a few old hand made ones in the beaded beams. I am tempted to go out and light the candles for a little while before folding up my beard, for the tall ones you sent me are now gracing the birthday hand wrought

88M

4499

masterpieces which are a part of you. The effect at night ought to be particularly striking, and the more so because I left on the still lovely petals of the blossoms hanging two or three feet below the clusters of fruit, and the whole thing looking in each case like a green goose suspended by the feet, its long neck stretching so far down that the pointed head like blossom almost touches the tops of the pews. If only Beardsley could have had a quick look at the Chapel in its present state, just before he took brush in hand to illustrate a tale from Poe.

I am glad to report that last night's rain continued intermittently all night and a slow drizzle persisted all day, giving the ground plenty of moisture before tonight's impending cold snap. Plants seem to much more impervious to cold if the ground be wet. I had hoped to get in a few whacks at Arenbourg this morning, but in view of the rain and the chill, plus a mild case of sniffles on my own hook, it seemed to me better to remain "put", to bang away on this machine and to straighten up a few odds and ends on my desk. The later is always disastrous, for I am always putting away something I had no intention, and at the moment I seem to have shuffled up a letter to hand from Elen, advising that she had been slap happy when the janitor had surprised her by putting a fine looking box on her desk, - the lost one which had contained the manuscript and other papers which she had reserved from the general excitement of moving.

I shall advise Elen to advise Carolyn, - who could ever get in touch with the latter, - that my chances of getting a look at Old Bonita Ranch are mighty slim this season. I believe Elen and her husband and Lucille and hers are going to Marshall for a prolonged week end around the 18th. But I am not, although if J. H. goes to Shreveport week after next, as planned, I might ride that far with him, if Carolyn wants to meet me in Shreveport and whisk me up to see her place, which, I believe, is but 35 miles further along the road. But I am bound to return here promptly and cannot dilly-dally along the way. I have no doubt the outing would do me no harm, but I don't want to make the jaunt at the present time, and should never want to, I guess, were it not that I should like to make a gesture of making a quick survey of Carolyn's place to give her some thoughts on solving some of her planting problems. In the first place, I can't expect any one but you to understand why I don't want to absent myself from here at the present time on primary grounds, and secondly, only you can appreciate why, - quite aside from the foregoing reasons, I really prefer to remain here. I must confess I have been pretty successful during the past few years in "staying put", but I still marvel that no one but you can understand that I am doing so by volition. Well, we shall cross the Marshall bridge when we get to it, and here's hoping the State Department or some such will assist me in calling "mine host" far afield long before any immediate plans can jell.....

102M

4500 George in the African House joining the program

Sunday, November 5th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your letter and a bevy of others came in Saturday's post--- but the secretaries came not.

That isn't exactly true, for one of them did make it by supreme effort precisely at 1:30 this afternoon, just as 52 Centenary pilgrims arrived, which was not exactly the most auspicious moment. He promised to return a little later, but "little" has expanded into "much" and I find myself saying that all of God's children probably do the best they can, and I would be doing better if I would practice patience more assiduously. Besides, today's and yesterday's unread letters hold the promise, - the guarantee of tomorrow delights, so that today's disappointment will be neatly balanced with the on-coming dawn.

Both yesterday's and today's schedules were considerably augmented beyond the anticipated, and so both last night and tonight I indulged in relaxation between nods by doing a bit of reading. For one thing, I dipped into "High Jungle" by William Beebe and was enchanted to find the volume has to do with an extraordinary spot but 15 miles from the native habitat of your foot-loose Venezuelans. I suppose they may have told you about the remarkable "Rancho Grande" which the dictator Gomez was building at the time of his death in 1936 on a niche he scooped out of the side of a mountain such a comparatively short distance beyond their city.

About the second or third chapter of "High Jungle" has a heap to say about this remarkable, unfinished pile, and while there is much space in between devoted to butterflies, frogs and like creatures of primary Beebe enthusiasm, his occasional references to one feature or another unique jungle fastness somehow rolls all into one the transitory elements of the Hatcher Longwood, the vastness of Christophe's mountain fortress in Santo Domingo and all in a setting as fabulous as Ludwig's Linderhof or Neuschwanstein.

Already half buried by landslides and encroaching jungle, this vast accumulation of concrete, steel and glass must be unlike anything else contrived in the 20th century, and the architecture so odd, - rooms perhaps 8 feet wide, 60 long and 54 feet high, - must be ever so striking.

But my figures are only approximate and there is no need for me to make a transcript of Mr. Beebe's opus. I shall

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merely add that if you haven't explored "High Jungle" as yet, you probably will find the details of this fabulous Beebe thumbnail sketch as striking as did I.

And speaking of Beebe reminds me of Miss Bestleman who accompanied him on one of his expeditions in the West Indies where she made those remarkable color sketches of fish on the floor of the ocean, the ones later reproduced by the National Geographic. I have lost all track of that lady, but for all I know, I may catch up with her in "High Jungle" before I am done with it.

Following the unusually prolonged summer session, autumn seems to have really arrived and this morning I think I detected a few wisps of frost before sun up. I didn't harvest all the banana crop but I did hang up four green "chandeliers" in the Chapel with the result that the pink mud walls look pinker than ever and "us-es little boy" more colorful than ever.

The thermometer remains in the cool 60's during the day but a brilliant sunshine yesterday and today made pilgrimaging more pleasant. Saturday witnessed to assaults by the road runners and three today. Following the departure of the 50 odd Centinarians this afternoon, and before I had reached the old magnolia, coming from the front gate, a flock of ladies from yesterday's on-slaught blew in, dragging their husbands with them. From this I deduce their Saturday tour was satisfactory, so far as they were concerned. I discovered that some of the group hailed from Iowa, a state which has always intrigued me much, and so instead of trying to sell them Louisiana, I pumped them for all they were worth about Des Moines, Grenell, Sioux Falls and the rest of the country side, so in the end I perhaps got more out of the visit than did they.

I mustn't forget to regale you with one feature of the larger tour that you would have found hilarious. The business had progressed as far as the African House, with me stationed, my back against the wall by the loom, haranguing the 50 odd human beings crowded into the room when a frantic wail cut in on my rigamarole, as the crowd suddenly surged back from one of the doors, pinning me against the wall. It seems that a couple of the ladies standing on the threshold and gazing in my direction, suddenly became conscious of something close behind them, and glancing around were flabbergasted at the sight of good old George, intent on joining in the tour. After all, there was no place for the human mass to go and terror laid a heavy hand on everyone nearest the door. What a time I had extricating myself and wading through the terror stricken bags, even the gentlemen present seemingly frozen into immobility. Eventually, however, I got to George, and after taking him by the hand, and setting him free, we got back to the business at hand, the ladies, of course, still swooning.....

0024

4502

Postell "1/
C. Donnell "1/
Rudolph "1/

Monday, November 6th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so, as guaranteed, I had a fine letter from you for today's reading, yours of Hallow's E'en.

And much it delights me, and well does it keep me abreast of what goes on in the world. And from the literary slant, I am particularly indebted to you for all particulars, none of which had come to my attention, naturally.

I believe Mr. Cain must have forgotten to include the third page in his last letter. He is certainly the same man who did "The Postman Always Rings Twice" and a flock of other books, although don't you wonder at his wide range of writing, and especially since he is so erudite in his grasp of the Civil War, one would almost suppose he might concentrate on that subject exclusively.

I hadn't heard about the William Brown Maloney book. I have never read any of his things, although he read a few chapters of one of his manuscripts to Lyle and me one night and it lasted much too long. Perhaps that was because I was sleepy, and perhaps it was because the subject matter seemed dull. I chatted with Lyle about it months later and Lyle, who could stand quite a bit of sex, surprised me by saying he felt Bill was always dragging in much too much sex in all the things he did. He is a much better conversationalist than Rose Franken, and yet it turns out that his wife is a better writer, and naturally the one seldom has much to do with the other, - that is to say, conversation as reflecting any parallel in the written word.

I am glad to know the Frank Yrby's domestic surroundings reflect his financial success. His earlier years, I know not how many, were spent in Louisiana where he taught at the Negro college at New Scotland, just outside Baton Rouge. I never met the man, but I occasionally see some of his former associates on that faculty and everyone seems to speak highly of him.

And how enchanted I am that you advised me of Mrs. Roosevelt's recording of page one of her last book. I shall order it immediately so I may receive it as soon as it is available. I have forgotten how long the mechanical labors require for getting the records properly executed, - about 3 months, perhaps, so, perhaps by the time February arrives, I may be dipping into that item.

2021

4503

I'm so glad you liked the Anatole France quotation, and I agree with you it is most apt to appear on a page by itself at the beginning of the book. And speaking of early pages in the book, there is another which will require no discussion, - the one carrying the dedication, which, I think you will agree whole heartedly with me when I say it could bear, if not the actual name, then inevitably that of

"My Lady of the Lamp".

And may I tell you that when I paused in mid flight for a quick cup of coffee with Celeste this morning, by a remarkable coincidence, -- the first time it ever happened, the clerk brought her a telephone message, and in so doing, handed her the incoming mail. Of course your letter to her was slap on the top, and of course she had to open it and run through it immediately. She was perfectly delighted and remarked that if she ever had a choice between having friends, - those with a head and those with a heart, she would instinctively take the latter, but that she felt it was wonderful to feel she had acquired the two in one in your particular case, for she is always declaring that Miss Lee has the finest mind of any one she ever knew, and withal the kindest heart. And if a rumble of thunder penetrated Manhattan from the great Southwest, then you recognized it readily as my own reverberating "Amen".

We didn't go to Briarwood this afternoon, as the Red River bridge at Grand Ecore is temporarily closed and I guess Celeste didn't want to use the Montgomery Ferry, although as to the reason, I can't imagine, since she usually hops that obstruction with nonchalance. But in view of Caroline's letter in today's post, it struck me that she is perhaps beginning to prod herself, and if that miracle should have transpired, it is just as well we didn't take up her evening.

The Postell letter, covering the Dr. Neurah matter, is interesting. I shall ask him to send me one of the publications he mentions as covering the Macdonough business. If it isn't too fat, it might be that you might like to paste it in one of your volumes by said Kane. Friend Postell was here in August when I was a little under the weather, which explains his reference to Dr. Rand. I talked with the latter today. He seems to be doing fine and is looking forward to next Sunday's movies at the negro church and reminded me again I am supposed to dine with them on Sunday night before going on to the baptisin'.

So much to talk about, so pleasant to re-read your letter. We ought to be hearing from Wagner, Trichell, et al shortly. I am doing a brief skit on the Yucca oil paintings.....

2021

4504

Kate Perkins
King Solomon 11/3
Janet Heller 11/3

Tuesday, November 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I thank you no end for your grand letter of Friday, and for all the clippings and small photographs and at the same breath may I grab at handfuls of oak leaf clusters to pin on your chest for the elegance of the Cloutier letter which seems to me nothing short of a masterpiece. It was certainly thoughtful of you to send the copy, for undoubtedly I shall hear repercussions from the Joyous Coast section almost any moment now.

And may I say how much I appreciate all your kindness in passing along so many interesting bits of news and the excerpts from the various news items of late. I was particularly impressed by your two excerpts from the Shaw obituary. It was, of course, the Terry-Shaw love letters that brought about the Court ruling covering ownership of letters we have discussed before. It didn't seem pertinent to the writer of the obituary, I suppose, to get off on a tangent to the extent of explaining that the book was immediately suppressed and that Mr. Shaw, if I remember correctly, handsomely reimbursed for the publisher's error in being too pre-mature. I have no doubt there will be a hurried issued of the letters, now that the Terry heirs at last own them.

And the other quotation regarding Mr. Shaw's only visit to the United States was a little bit misleading, - and I can't tell if I have dwelt endlessly on this point recently or not. Mr. Shaw's boat docked in the East River one morning and Mr. Shaw immediately had all his windows or port holes blacked out, refusing to so much as glance at the Manhattan skyline or to step foot on shore all during the day. About half an hour before he was to appear at the Metropolitan, he had a taxi rigged up with curtains to cut off all view, and drove to the Opera House and back in something like a black box on wheels. All of this and his succeeding speech seemed to me the ultimate in stupid frivolity and a ill becoming a man of his great intellect. It was just another case, - as in the relations of Joe Henry with Pat, -- in that he sometimes paid too high a price for his publicity or what he styled his jokes.

He did get off his boat when it touched at California, long enough to travel to San Simeon Ranch to have luncheon with William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies. And I always assumed this was but another of G. B. S.'s ideas of a joke or a slap at civilized Americans. Forgive me if I have done a l this before.

4505

4505

I am so glad you have found the captions to be alright. If old Alexandria will only send me the others he took three weeks ago, I shall get them going shortly. I thought I had the good luck of having a helper today to assist me with the Portraits, but it turned out ever so differently. Mrs. Coombs dropped in and offered to run through a page on which I was struggling. But I immediately discovered that she had in mind to correct any errors in typing, reading the manuscript to herself. Later, - tonight in fact, I had Mr. Brew run through two or three pages with me, and I find several places that can be vastly improved if I can only find a suitable reader. It was interesting that Mrs. Coombs didn't even catch the absence of one of the verbs, and since you are quite capable of attending to the spelling, her efforts in my behalf, while of the best of intentions, was absolutely worthless, so far as being of any help to me. I shall try to finish the portraits within a day or so, sending them along as soon as they are finished.

As for the Time-Table, I am not going to finish it until I hear from you. What with the interruptions while contriving it, and no opportunity of getting it read back satisfactorily, I have no idea if it is up to standard for printing, and so will depend on your impression regarding the first part, before going ahead to finish the balance.

I like your "portrait of the author" better than any I have ever seen, but I fear the presence of any likeness of me in the Scrapbook would lend scant enchantment to the casual reader. It is possible I may be forced to climb in, however, unless I can have better luck than up to now in tracking down a good photograph of Grandpere restored, in which I do not figure. I have a large glossy one similar to the one that appeared in the Times Picayune in the Melrose article a year or two ago, but I did not send it along with the other illustrations, hoping that Harry Smith, whom I had photograph the picture two months ago, - I have forgotten my verb, - but the point is that I am hoping he may come across with a clear photograph which I can substitute for the only other one I have of the portrait, - the one in which I appear. The only advantage of the latter is the fact that the presence of a human figure perhaps gives a clearer concept of the unusual size of the Grandpere canvas. Perhaps I shall send this one along anyway, so that you may determine how best the business can be handled.

I know the Historical Society will be delighted with the photographs coming to hand today. I shall try to knock off appropriate captions for them, - about three sentences each, and get them off to the President shortly.

So many things to talk about, so little space provided. Little King's letter seemed a little sad. He enclosed \$5.00 for the little bank he is asking me to keep for him.

4506

4506

Wednesday, November 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that your nice big envelope containing the likenesses of the speiak Cinderella came to hand in this morning's post and that I am "bien tickle" with an accent on the e.

Both portraits are elegant and at the moment I know not how I shall employ them, but I am keeping them "unattached", as it were, for I know they are going to be put to some particular business before I get through with them. How nice of you to be so nice to me.

And may I say how noble you are to bring up the matter of the several questions in the Diary that should be settled forthwith. I must apologize at the same time for the messy response I have made to your inquiries, - for, as you will note from the attached sheet, I jotted them down in the order you asked them, with my secretary fiddling to fly out to a wake on Little River, so that the mistakes I made exceeded anything thus far contrived, but I am hoping you may find the answers within your grasp, even though they were of necessity dashed off in a tempest.

I got off the smaller prints arriving yesterday, - off to the Secretary of the Historical Society today, writing captions for each and hoping I didn't go too far afield in my efforts. I assumed the captions would probably not exceed two or three sentences, and so I tried to jam in that limited space the salient points concerning each of all you sent and one odd little one I chanced to find of the African House.

And before leaving the picture business, I am going to have the effrontery to state quite frankly that I should be glad to have some small pictures of Yucca, as sketched by Lady Bvdam. It seems to me the end papers in The Friends of Joe Gilmore is the best, strongest reproduction I have seen, although it is possible that the fold down the middle where the two pages meet, - the last page and the cover, might make photographing of that particular one impossible. There is an identical sketch on a single page inside the book somewhere but I don't know if that is too faint or not. Perhaps it could be photographed and if printed rather strong, wouldn't be faint at all.

Somehow I feel "shamed-faced" or rather "shame-faced" to speak right out in such a bold fashion about this item which is more or less in unvarnished response to your kind inquiry of yesterday as to any items I might have in mind. It seems to me that this particular sketch and possibly the pictorial map, - Nina's, if it comes out clearly, might be excellent in a size that will go into a regular envelope, as subtle advertising, to be tucked in to letters, so many of which go out of here daily.

2024

4507

I thought there might be a clearer print in Old Louisiana, but I didn't find one. And please don't bother with this particular item at the present time if things are beginning to swirl too fast in the pre-holiday merry-go-round (and parenthetically, it just occurs to me the French word for that contraption is "montagne russe" which is sort of funny now - a-days.

It seems to me the Buydam item might be just right for this type of subtle advertising. What do you think. And if your local emporium is getting jammed up with pre-holiday business, let the whole thing go and we can discuss it after the holidays, or I can eventually toss it in the Harry Smith direction, although he has just gone up on his prices and down on his deliveries, which is humiliating.

And now to another note aside from "me, me, me"...

And so you perhaps got away to the up-lands of the Hudson for a little week end jaunt. I shall be so interested to learn how you made it and if Egon was among those present. By now the countryside ought to be at its best and I hope everything united to make the trip delightful.

Locally everything is alright except for a bit of hurly-burly about the plantation, - some kind of scuffles with the master and the slaves, and I need scarcely identify the one to whom the latter turn. At the moment I am trying to hold the lid on to keep the Dark Duke from shaking the local dust from his feet, but probably shall have scant success. The master's patience is wonderful and departure on the part of the servant will be of his own volition, but I struggle to keep him from doing so, since this is home, and to his simple soul, no other place ever will be, and I hate to see him head out into unhappiness.

And how about yesterday's election wherein you did your duty as a citizen and then took to the high hills. You should have encountered many Democrats on the run as you headed back toward town. I am glad the Senators from New York and Connecticut were re-elected, but I am sorry all the Tafts, Milikins, Nixons and so on, - not to skip that Utah Bennet or whatever his name is, for now all social legislation must be definitely shelved for at least 2 years, possible 6. There is but one ray of light, one promise for 1952, - and that is that if they are smart, the Democrats may be impelled to put forward their best man while the Republicans, now so hopelessly in the hands of the reactionaries, may again fail to see anything but advantages for the rich, and so go down to defeat in another Presidential election. Naturally everybody I know in the financial brackets around here is perfectly entranced at the enormous Taft plurality, and along about now I reckon even little Miss Alberta must be doing vast songs and dances portraying her joy that Ohio's favorite son, I had hoped that Health Insurance and more Fair Practices legislation might result from a Democratic victory, but even though these must now wait, they are bound to be in the cards in the years to come. After all, neither the Rev. Taft nor any of his hill-billy Southern Democrats can turn back the clock, even though they may slow down the pendulum for a spell.....

2024

4508 Mrs. Wagner
Dora

11/3
11/3

Thursday, November 9th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Lots of stuff in today's post, but only the enclosed notes of any interest.

I shall write both la Wagner and Dora before folding up my beard, for I gather they both could stand a little up-lift, and I shall assure la Wagner that we shall hold open a space for her symposium when things in Iola have returned to normalcy.

There was a pleasant surprise in the mail, pursuant of your recent report that Madam Roosevelt had recently made a recording of a portion of "This I Remember", for here came the book, hot off the recording press. While awaiting my secretary I sampled a page or two. Mrs. Roosevelt reads the first chapter, - just about ten years after she made an appearance on the first record of the first volume of her autobiography. I find her voice seems to have deepened somewhat, and one of these days I shall try out the first page of her original volume in comparison with the first page of the present book.

Eventually, as you have suggested in the past, we must run through portions of this volume together. I read but a little, but sufficiently to discover the answer to what has long puzzled me, - the reason why Al Smith seemingly switched to the side of entrenched wealth in the 1930's, after having for so many years seemingly been on the side of the under-privileged. I found Mrs. Roosevelt's few sentences concerning snobbery to be excellent, - the cultivated individual disdaining all who haven't had his cultural advantages, the financially successful self-made man disdaining everyone who has had greater cultural advantages than himself.

You will recall that Mrs. Roosevelt recognizes Al Smith as being in the latter category, and in putting her finger precisely on the spot, she apparently, in so doing, caused a yell from other members of the same group, and notably Jim Farley who, I suspect, as Chairman of the New York Democratic Committee, had the dominant say in selecting the Democratic candidate for Governor, and in selecting some third rate politician named Lynch to run against Dewey, succeeded in loosing the Governorship for the Democrats in Tuesday's election.

4509

Another cold wave rolled down from the North this afternoon, driving the thermometer down to the 30's and what with an occasional wisp of rain or drizzle, - wisp of drizzle is a curious phrase, made it seem just like a November day.

I should have inserted one of Little King's (Smiles) after the above sentence, for "just like a November day" is a phrase the "adam" liked to quote on occasion, recalling a bag who was here from Hawaii one Thanksgiving Day who contemplated the outside world from inside the house, remarking in apparent astonishment, that the weather outside should seem so much like a November day.

The advent of real autumn seems to have induced a great impetus on the part of rodents to seek shelter inside, with the added appeal, no doubt, to Mattie's slovenly habit of leaving the dishes unwashed over night. A "Pied Piper" from the Natchitoches Health Department put out some of that remarkable poison, known as "1080", and while no mice were effected, the harvest of rats was imposing, - some 18 clattering up the kitchen floor at dawn today. Knowing nothing of Chemistry, I can't imagine of what "1080" may consist, - colorless and odorless as it is, and having the appearance of mere water. But it must be mighty powerful, since just one lick of the stuff seems to knock any animal slap into Kingdom Come. And many cat or dog taking but one bite of a rat thus killed, will instantly fall out, too, the Health Department says. I certainly hope G andpa and Charlies don't make any mistakes during the present campaign.

The Dean of something or other from the local college telephoned me this noon, asking if a tour of some society or other might be arranged for tomorrow or Saturday, as might suit my convenience. It seemed that neither day suited my convenience and so I suggested another contact be established sometime next week. What with the chill in the air, I figure it is an excellent time for me to "stay put", devoting myself to this machine and to the furthering of the designs we have currently to hand. A week hence, and the time will have arrived for the Marshall meeting, and naturally I am be-stirring myself to find some lame excuse to send along as to why I am not attending. Isn't it odd that the real reason of just not wanting to isn't sufficient.

Last week I wrote Helen, asking her to tell Carolyn, should she contact her, to telephone me, at which time, if she does, I shall take myself out through that medium of contact. The (interruption), - and so I fold forthwith....

4510

Time-Table (cont.)
move camera
in Chapel Overdyke

4510 Mayor Comer (Natchez)
11/8
Overdyke 11/8

Friday, November 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that your grand letter of Saturday came to hand in today's post, but come to think of it, the date line was Sunday. 11/8

I shall be all ears to hear a report of your trip across the bay and all the particulars covering the European jaunt of your host. The social omissions in Dusseldorf were striking. Somehow the absence of one call on the agenda reminds me of the prominence cotton assumes in the 1776 inventory, - the more striking because of its absence.

And I am indebted to you for giving me your opinion of the Time-Table and the impression you expressed that it might be alright to include in the Scrapbook. I shall forge ahead, therefore, with the balance of the day, filling in and correcting previous entries as they come to hand in their transcribed form.

In the same post came a few other letters, some of which I shall send along under separate cover, even though they turn out to be of scant interest. I have, up to this moment, read but the Overdyke one a phrase of which amused me, - the quotation by Zaline's nephew, Tony, who is just a bit balmy, and who chanced to be present at one single time when Zaline honored me with a glass of wine.

Personally, I think the Overdykes were slightly out of order, descending unannounced on poor old Joe, 50 odd strong, but that is purely a personal opinion, and for all I know, Joe may have liked all the excitement attending such a horde. But I guess I have always lacked whatever it takes to enjoy piloting more than two or three people at a time to any place, probably because I don't like mobs. I recall having once demurred when asked by Mrs. Pillsbury of Minneapolis chancing to be in Paris, if I would accompany her family and her sister's, to Versailles. I think there were 7 in all. Eventually I took four as a vast concession, and a few days later invited the remaining three to dine with me there, but it seemed both uncivilized and stupid to take 8 or 7 under my wing for a single flight, and in the end I'll bet everybody had a better time by going in reduced numbers, and of course I never could spend too much time in the lovely avenues of that loveliest of places.

01210

4511

At the moment the big topic of conversation locally is the weather. Usually we get a frost by the 13th of the month, but this year things are running ahead of time and 26 degrees is forecast for tonight.

A cold East wind suspended all tractor operations today which enabled me to get quite a few things attended to, what with the availability of some dusky hands for piddling about in the gardens, tightening up faucets, re-enforcing fence post and so on. Peter passed by after noon to lend me a hand in harvesting the balance of the banana crop and now the Chapel looks as gay as a fruit stand at a charity bazaar. I didn't realize movie cameras were going a mile a minute until after I had descended from the ladder with the last big old bunch of bananas. It turned out that some joint efforts were being made by Texas and California organizations to record old Louisiana plantations and that somebody at the Post Office had turned them loose in the front garden before notifying me. A servant arrived to acquaint me with the business after being lost for half an hour, and so my performance as recorded on film ought to reveal me as being not at all camera shy, - especially since I didn't know there were any cameras this side of Hollywood.

Little Miss Clemence came by shortly after the film contingent had departed, bringing with her a bampitin' mural she had contrived for me on a narrow window shade Nina had sent her.

The thing is about 12 to 18 inches wide and perhaps 4 feet in length. Slap in the middle of the canvas is a white church dominating the business. To the left run figures advancing down to Little River where converts are being immersed. To the right stretches the graveyard, with some quite gay toms and markers. I have set the composition just above the double doors at the end of the gallery, - the room to the West balancing the Chapel to the East. By happy coincidence, the dominant white church appears immediately above the very center of the space, and at precisely the point above the line made by the joining of the double doors below. The green of the grass in the picture and the blue of the water is sufficiently subdued to harmonize generally with the colors in the Gobelin on the South wall of the gallery, while the white of the robes of the converts and the pink parasols and yellow dresses of the initiated and interested spectators form just the proper note to enliven the composition to the point of awakening passing interest. But how did I get off the track to this extreme length. But more off the track anon....

Baptizing mural

01210

4512

Dora 11/6
Carolyn Ramsey

Grandpa died 11/10
showing of film at Rockford
Baptist Church 11/9

Sunday, November 12th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It's bitter, what with a frost last night and another tonight, the banana leaves looking like saffron ghosts and a steady shower of leaves sifting down through the golden sunshine all day long.

I have another death to report, -- Grandpa. We were such staunch friends for such a number of years, we had more or less merged our personalities, at least I had his. In casting about for some recompense, perhaps I shall discover it in the fact that Grandpa's merged personality will depart as he wings his way to Heaven so that I shall be less feline in my use of claws on occasion. On Saturday noon Grandpa caught a rat who had apparently tasted of the poison, and so passed along the devastation to his captor. Gladly would I have provided a fine funeral but my old friend crawled into the hole in the mud wall at the end of the house and lacked strength to respond more than with a faint cry to my calls. Something tells me Grandpa is going to linger long with me when the weather turns warm. Poor old Grandpa, he was such a nice guy.

In spite of pilgrims and the undertaking of half a dozen things, I even found time to read a couple of pages from Stephan Zweig's Marie Antoinette, and I liked what I read. I don't remember having read it before, although I ought to have. I suppose I had confused it with Hilaire Belloc's or some such. It seems to me to catches the personalities especially well and although he seems a little off the track in some places about Versailles, what he has to say is well set down and worth reading. It must be I had forgotten one point which is of no importance. Zweig says the Court removed to Marly or rather to Choisy on Louis XV's death, but I had always supposed it was to Marly. He doesn't mention the latter place but once, and then merely saying the Queen once took the Court to Marly because Mme. de Polignac was in the neighborhood during a pregnancy.

Surprisingly enough he has quite a business about the King's aunts at Bellevue, but doesn't do anything about the place by way of description of history. I am surprised it seems to speak of Mme. de Pompadour and Mme. du Barry as about the same type, which is probably mere over-simplification, for such an excellent historian couldn't have believed the two women were in any way similar, and somehow while praising the

4513

Petit Trianon as the finest example of 18th century architecture extant, he never mentions it as the handiwork of Mme. de Pompadour, but somehow succeeds in giving the impression it was a Du Barry item.

Well, so much for that, and I shall probably bore you with more about it before I am done.

Dr. Rand came to see me this afternoon for a while, and I joined the family and friends at the camp around first dark, after I had finished some stuff I was doing on this machine. There were several guests there including the millionaire Crowells of Alexandria and it was fun talking politics during supper with Mr. Crowell, an extravagant admirer of Senator Taft. The food was heavenly and boundless as usual, including the most wonderful beefsteak I ever tasted, creamed chicken with much almonds streaming through it, etc., etc., etc.

Outside, the night was wonderful, the air so clear, the surface of Lake River so smooth, the svelt little moon so gay. I guess there were ten or twelve for supper, after which we headed up the road, some Mrs. Blanchard with me on the back seat with Blythe driving and Zelma to show the way. We journeyed through the Joyous Coast, past Beaufort and on to Bayou Natchez, where the 4 or 5 cars trailing us made a wrong turn and after half an hour we had to go back a few miles to find them. In the excitement, Puny backed up a little too swiftly and rammed Dr. Rand's car. It was hurly-burly in the dark. But we got the cavalcade going again, traveling for miles all the course of Old River, west of the cement highway, miles into the back country. Eventually we came to Rockford Baptist Church where several hundred negroes were awaiting our advent. The movies delighted the audience, and, as always there was a slightly different twist to the presentation. Dr. Rand had forgotten some gadget or other that supplies sound with the film, and so the congregation undertook to sing hymns during the show. In view of the subject of the film, the singing seemed perfectly in harmony. But two or three places in the show the audience is invariably moved to hilarity by the flopping around and swinging of hips by some of the new converts being dragged out of the water, so that the up-surge of hymn singing would occasionally be broken by roars of laughter by the singers, immediately after which they would pick up the hymn at the precisely the point where they had left off for the temporary digression into gales of laughter. 10:15 and we were home again, or at least I was and the Rand party must be almost back to Alexandria by now. So goes the week end, a little sorrow, a little joy, and I hope yours was all the latter....

showing of
baptizing
scene at
Rockford
Baptist Church

4514

Ann. Found for the Blind
1/9

Monday, November 13th, 1950.

Memorandum: Some of the above material was used in the book "The Blind" by Ann. Found for the Blind.

Indian Summer is back again and I couldn't resist the impulse to spend much time this morning at Arenbourg where everything looked so healthy and de-frosted, and the soil so inviting to be worked over.

I must say the camellias don't look so very prosperous, but everything else appears to be in the pink of condition.

Either with this note or in an accompanying envelope, I shall enclose the material for the Melrose portraits. You will note I omitted the street address of the Lion studio in New Orleans. I believe this was given in the Landsford letter which is here but a secretary wasn't when I was writing the thing and as none has subsequently showed up, it occurs to me you might chance to have a copy of said Landsford item, and if you do, it might provide the street address of the studio. If you don't chance to have the item conveniently to hand, we can omit the street and merely use the word New Orleans and it won't matter much either way, although if the precise location is available without too much delving, it might be nice to include.

As in all manuscripts, I trust you will feel quite free to run through this material, fore-armed with a blue pencil, making any cuts or changes that seem appropriate.

In the next batch of photographs to be sent you, I shall include the ones to be used with this material, - the two of Grandpere, one of the Black Swan and one of Father and Son. Of course this chapter could readily be expanded, giving further details regarding the painter of Grandpere's portrait, and all the data from the N. Y. P. Print Room, but it seems to me for the scrapbook type of thing we are in the process of contriving, the present tonnage is about right. Or do you think not.

If that trifling Harry Smith would only get a move on, I might be able to get some pertinent pictures going in your direction shortly. And speaking further of pictures, I am so glad I have an excellent reproduction of the Father and Son item, taken years ago by whom I know not. It should by all means, I think you will agree, be photographed for you and me, so that we may make use of small reproductions from time to time, as it is probably the best one is ever likely to run across,

4124

4515

what with the double difficulty of reproducing pastels successfully, and particularly the ones that must be photographed through glass last night, in spite of the advanced hour, I found I wasn't so very sleepy, and so I read a couple of pages from two different volumes, - Mrs. Roosevelt's and Sweig's Marie Antoinette. Come to think of it, there are a couple of ladies who differed considerably, even as to luck in getting husbands. I read the paragraph in "This I Remember" touching on Harry Hopkins which I found revealing, and particularly the line indicating that toward the end, Mr. Hopkins tended more and more toward the social side in his personal contacts. Lyle had often told me of somewhat sumptuous public dinners he had had with the Hopkins, -- husband and wife, - during the Washington interlude of the Saxon final years. He mentioned the swank element in some of these gatherings, but somehow I had forgotten all about it until I stumbled over Mrs. Roosevelt's line regarding this phase of the Hopkins career.

I recall a prolonged sitting wherein clothes were discussed one night before a friendly fire here at Iucca in which Lyle, Howard Hunter and I speculated on what extent clothes reveal the personality of the wearer. I illustrated some point or other by remarking that I couldn't recall ever seeing Harry Hopkins in a photograph that indicated he inclined toward conservatism in his garb and that the pictures remaining most clearly in my memory were those suggesting the somewhat flashy finery one associates with habitués of race tracks. I can remember how heartily Howard laughed at this and declared he was going to tell Harry what I had said the next time he saw him. At that time they were quite close, Howard having but recently, if I remember, having succeeded Harry as head of WPA. Howard inclined toward ultra conservatism and somehow recalled to mind the stereotyped Wall Street broker in his black suits or his Oxford grays. Lyle, too, leaned toward the conservative side, and while his white linen summer suits and enormous Panama hats, especially on such a huge frame, were not always inconspicuous, still Lyle did tend toward conservative blue serges for business and usually neckties of solid subdued hues. Somehow I always think of Harry as in blazer jackets for sport wear, and golden brown serges for business, and yet why I have this so indelibly impressed on my mind, I cannot say, unless I have superimposed the race track tendencies on to the figure of the man who so much liked to frequent the track.

But what fine feathers -- or gaudy ones -- have to do about indicating which way the human being tends and trends, I don't know, and for the life of me, I can't say how I got so far off on the present tangent.

The promise is for fair weather ahead, and I shall devote more time tomorrow to this machine than I did today, but I am not sorry I did have some time in the open at Arenbourg.....

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4516 Mrs. Alberta

11/14/50

Tuesday, November 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your grand letters as of Thursday and of Friday, last past, together with attached transcriptions. How nice you are to me.

First off, let me take up the matter of your inquiry regarding my wish concerning the dedication. It must be "To My Lady of the Lamp."

I think it is important that this book should have been contrived. Without it, the understanding of the South, -- of the United States, would be incomplete. So far as I am concerned in the matter, it never could have been done without you. I constantly find myself saying your name as author rather than mine should be given as the author. Under such circumstances, frankly, even the dedication seems woefully inadequate. But all that matters is that you know how I feel about the matter and it will always be our book, regardless of what the printed page may read. -- Ours only, and that's why I shall always cherish it with all my heart.

I am so glad the mulatto pictures came out so nicely, but it's odd, isn't it, that they took on such a different tint from the originals. Still, this factor will perhaps make them the more striking as the reader ponders on the question of 100 per cent purity and makes up his own mind as to what should, if anything, be done about it.

I intended saying a few days back that the matter of the number of letters we use from any particular individual I leave entirely to your own good judgement. The fact is that we have pushed this chapter to about the greatest bulk of any, I believe, and for that reason I thought perhaps we might keep down the number of those like Rose Franken, who was no particular friend of the Madam and whose letters are perhaps more of interest because of her name than because of their contents.

And before leaving the field of correspondence, I might add that a telegram came along about first dark from Alanzo Landsford, saying he hoped to be in Natchitoches on Thursday or Friday and hoped he might be able to get down to see me. I shall be

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especially interested to hear what he has to say about Jules
Lion and I shall try to stir up some enthusiasm on his part, -
which may not be made stirring, perhaps, with a view to tracking
down some more Lion canvases. It is so good to have the
transcripts you made for me from the Print Room of the N. Y. P.
Library, and these will be helpful, too, in going over the Lion
subject with Herr Landsdorf.

This morning at Melrose, this afternoon at Arenbourg, I
got quite a lot of things done. J. H. gave me a half dozen men
this morning and what with the thermometer at 80, it seemed
odd enough to be contending with plants which had been cooked to
a shriveling brown by the heavy frosts of last week end. In
the case of the cannas and butterfly lilies, the frost bitten
foliage isn't at all pretty, but the great festoons of banana leaves
are altogether lovely, a pinkish tan, looking as though
they were less the results of a contact with Jack Frost than
with some conservative Picasso or some such.

With added interest in things South American, I listen to
shootings in Venezuela and comprehend nothing as to what it is
all about, but trust it has no significance, so far as the general
wellfare of those hop-skip and jump artists you know. None of
it sounds like Dr. Beebe but there seems to be lots of "high jungle"
in political circles regardless.

And I read a little more from Herr Zweig's opus last night and
find this biography to be the best, I guess, that I have read
about Marie Antoinette. His emphasis on her psychological trends
strikes a different note than anything I recall on the part of
any of her other biographers, and the thoroughness with which
he goes into the Fersen liason goes to the ultimate in a fashion
that likewise seems out-doing other studies on the subject. The
absence of any reference to Benjamin Franklin up to now, and we are
in October, 1789, seems a little odd, since I had always thought
of the popularity of Dr. Franklin with the Queen gave an impetus
to republicanism in Europe that set things to whizzing in that
direction much faster than it ever would have, had there been
no "merry-go-rounds" at Versailles with "Poor Richard" and "Antoinette"
on board. But perhaps perhaps "the first civilized American" is
being saved to make his bow in a later chapter.

I laughed at your suggestion that Mr. Kane be tarred and
feathered and chased out of Louisiana. It seems to me that
would be so unchristian, foisting such a loutish person off on to
somebody else. And what in the world do you suppose feathers were
used for in this tar and feather business. I have always wondered
about that. It seems to me the feathers would tend to gather up
the tar and make the de-tarring operation easier. Or were the
feathers a delicate concession to clothe exposed parts, or what. We
really ought to investigate that ancient custom, don't you think so...

2124

Guest Book -

4518

Wednesday, November 15th, 1950.

Memorandum:

11/10

How nice to find your letter in this morning's post,
together with the big envelope of returned photographs which
came through nicely, and along with them, the extra envelope
you so thoughtfully enclosed.

Mail time was the one moment of the day that has seemed
real. The rest has been all hurly-burly, a flock of people
working in the gardens to scant point, and pilgrims starting
at 9, just after I had returned from Arenbourg, and this and
that for the balance of the day, including 50 bags at one gulp
during the afternoon, not to mention a flock from Savannah,
Georgia, arriving after 4.

What with a nice fat moon dreaming hazily in a
summer's night sky, and a big wake going on at St. Augustine's
Church on Little River, the night ought to be a big success,
too, but Little River will not miss me, for a billion people
will be milling about, what with such favorable atmospheric
conditions, and I reckon I'll scarcely need Herr "Zeeweeg" to
rock me to sleep.

I am so glad you mentioned all the things you did
concerning the Scrapbook. I want to run through your letter
again to be sure I caught all the points as I raced through
it between on-slaughts of pilgrims.

Your selection for the Guest Book sounds excellent.
In the event the chapter needs additional padding, we can
take in any others you may feel inclined to consider, excepting
but the two previously mentioned as being completely out.
Dr. Rand was supposed to supply me with his page for that
item, dated some time previous to 1948, but it hasn't
come through as yet. I hesitate to chunk at him about this
but I shall certainly drop him a note regarding the matter
before folding up my beard tonight.

I think it would be nice to ask Dora about the matter,
and I shall write him about his entry forthwith. It seems
to me he must be a little distracted at the moment for two or thr
three things I have touched upon recently in letters to him have
brought forth no response, - subjects which generally be-get
a pot-shot, - such as the Macdonough business of Dr. Mearns, which

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I thought might call forth at least a vague salvo, - what with his usual eloquence in the Kane department usually.

It would seem as though a little introduction might be in order regarding the Guest Book. I shall attempt to fashion something shortly.

And thanks for mentioning the originals of the correspondence which are here. I shall include them in the next package with the photographs, should the latter ever come to hand, I hope.

And also thanks for speaking of the Cane River article. Frankly, I thought I had sent it with the last batch of photographs, but I assume I did not. I think I have it rigged up alright, and so I shall get that off to you shortly, too. I am hoping I may get quite a few things done this week end. At least I am going to be here, and if any one who can spell out the letters of the alphabet comes to hand, I shall press said unsuspecting person into service.

Carolyn telephoned from Marshall this morning, asking if she might pick me up on Friday. I, naturally demurred. I told her eventually I would pass by when things are a little less pressing in these parts. I want to give her whatever assistance I can concerning her planting, but I can't see spending Friday and Saturday up yonder at the present time. Some day Celeste or somebody will be going to Shreveport, and I can have Carolyn run down there to pick me up and bring me back to said place, and that will be amply long for me to accomplish anything I can undertake in the horticultural department. It would be pleasant being with Helen, Carolyn and Lucille for an evening but I should rather conserve my energies at the moment for Arenbourg and the Scrapbook when so many things are cooking. Added to this is the factor that Lucille is a grand person, always entranced to hear what Helen, Carolyn and I have to say, and ready to contribute observations and contributions of interest, but she functions on a vaguely different vibration so that one must be charitably inclined conversationally to keep things going right when she is present, and frankly, if I am to take time out to be with the other two, I should like to talk about books and pictures and publications going full tilt without having to be courteous to Lucille and keep switching to more purely social stuff.

There are still plenty of weeds at Arenbourg, but the "children" look so gay and satisfied and prepared for the impending winter that it is refreshing to begin the day in that quarter. I have a few letters, unread, one from the Maryland Cain, - long-ish, but I suppose all secretaries are at the wake, and I am almost asleep, and so I shall fold herewith.....

1320

4520 Marybelle Davis 11/11
Nina 11/11/50

Landsdorf vs
re: Cain letter (not enclosed)

Thursday, November 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

An elegant rain came rolling in about an hour before daylight, with much flashes and rumble of thunder. It kept going intermittently until noon when the clouds gave way without any change in thermometer readings. And so the afternoon was as flooded with sunshine as the morning had been with water, and tonight the moon rides on high in a marvelously clear, new washed sky.

I didn't get any gardening done, but I did round up a few odds and ends before the Knipmeyers arrived with three guests.

This afternoon came Mr. and Mrs. Landsdorf. I liked them both. In stature and crispness of perruque, he reminded me a bit of Mr. Belle. The smoothness of his skin and the dark liquid of his eyes suggested the same smoothness and depth of coloring so frequently found in certain semetic types. Mrs. Landsdorf put me in mind a little of Dorothy Bernhends, - was that the name, - and what ever happened to those people.

They were congenial and of course liked everything they saw and seemed floored at the extent of it. The Father and Son exceeded Mr. Landsdorf's expectations. He thinks it one of the finest he has ever seen. He thought it dated from the late 1840's or early 1850's. What struck him especially was the unusual strength of character as revealed by this composition in pastel which, he thinks, as a medium doesn't usually lend itself to force so much as does oil.

He was struck by the portraits of Grandpere's son and daughter gracing the paneling in the living room here at Yucca. Although they are not signed, he had no doubt they were from the brush of Lyons, and so it appears we have both a lion and a couple of Lyons, which seems odd. As I already knew what I knew about the latter artist, I let him tell what he knew. He said he was both a sculptor and painter living in Natchez in the 1850's. So far as I know, I have never seen any of the oils by Lyons, but I do know one or two of his marbles. But we passed on to another subject and I didn't mention the little bust of Rebecca Gustine at Oakland, which I suppose was sold with the house when Miss Jeanne died, and I didn't mention the old private graveyard on one of the Conner plantations down on the Lower Woodville Road, not far from Laurel Hill where

0524

4521

a side view of the face of a girl buried there is carved in marble.

The sculptor Lyons inserted notices in the *Matchez* newspapers as was the custom for artists to do in the ante bellum period, and eventually when we read through our collection, we shall run across him and be the happier for the acquaintance.

The *Andsforths* have bought an old house in New Orleans on Bayou St. Jean and are all wrapped up with plans for its restoration. They are a charming couple and the house will blossom delightfully under their enthusiastic care, I think.

They are on our side as regards the human side of things and that lends much to the pleasure of conversation. They tried to extract a promise out of me to come down to New Orleans as their guest for over the holidays or whenever after that that I would care to. You have a picture of me heading out in that direction, I suppose, but it was kind of them to be so cordial.

Just one more item from the conversation that will amuse you. They said *Weeks Hall* goes on the water wagon regularly now during the Lenten season. They were over at his place in New Iberia the other night and as things progressed, *Weeks* felt an impulse to contact Vatican City without delay, and a telephone connection was established without delay. Do you reckon His Holiness gives Papal Blessings by trans-Atlantic telephone now. If so, how the world does move.

I finally got around to read the *Cain* letter and I find it a remarkably fine account of how the military moved up and down the *Cane River* country. Mr. *Cain's* grasp of all this deployment is wonderful and certain points, such as the skirmish in which several boats and a hundred negroes were scalled to death was never known of to anyone in this immediate region whom I ever met. The contact or rather the conflict thus mentioned must have taken place on Red River just a little below the present Southern extremity of the *Melrose* holdings on Red River. I think this data may be of the greatest value for our scrapbooks covering the *Cane River* country during the Civil War period. It represented a military operation lending distinction to neither side and for that reason probably never got into history books, for I assume Mr. *Cain* must have reconstructed these details from endless labors in the War Department or where ever the more confidential data covering these operations may have been filed. How nice to be able to discuss all these things with you and how glad I am you are acquainted with the neighborhood, knowing so much better than those living slap on the river....

*Cain letter
never read.*

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Overdylee student
"19

Friday, November 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Your perfectly elegant letter of Sunday last past reached me today, and as I read it tonight, I laughed to myself as I recalled how you always disagree with me when I write "No good" at the bottom of my letters, and how violently I disagreed with you in this instance when you tried to write the same thing without convincing me one whit, -- whatever a whit may be.

I am perfectly enchanted with all the news and like *Oliver Twist*, am eager for more. Of the *Staten Island* report, I am particularly curious to know something about Aunt *Ella*. I don't know why, but somehow without knowing much about her, Aunt *Ella* has always appealed to me and I am always delighted when you mention her. I hope the poor soul is making it alright.

And thanks for particulars regarding *Dusseldorf*. It must be ever so difficult to purvey a pep talk in that direction, what with the possibility of a censor prying through every word and phrase. How lucky are we, and how nice of you to have made possible the directness with which we can compare notes and share in our mutual joys and sorrows.

And thanks endlessly for telling me of the film of *Paris* in the 1800's. I didn't know Mr. *Woolley* was doing presentations for that type of thing and he must be splendid. And how nice you could get a fleeting glimpse of the *Seine* from the *Meudon* heights in the *Rodin* sector. What a map, in the manner of the *Cane River* plantation one being planned, would one of the *Seine* from *Paris* to *Marly* be. Starting with *La Muette*, *Chateau de Madrid*, *Bagatelle*, -- but what's the use.....

And to see so many of the distinctive and distinguished personalities of the period, and I am sure their Gay '90 costumes must have been something out of a super annuated *Godey*. You mentioned *Debussy* among others, and it strikes me just now that I always confuse his portraits with those of *Cezanne*, and I wonder if they were a bit alike, or if perhaps I am merely guilty of having superimposed the one on another. What a pity they didn't catch good old *Peter Illyovitch* on one of the ancient films, too, for he must have been flying around *Paris* about the time of the *Exposition* and if he and *Debussy*, as friends of *Frau von Eck* would have been wonderful to see together.

And thanks for telling me of the Noble Prize for Mr. *Faulkner*. That was news to me, and of course I am wondering if there can't be some good reason for the appointment. Personally Mr. *Faulkner*

SS21

4523

is comparatively vague in my mind, since I have never explored his stuff very far, what with the few things of his I have read having enchanted me not at all. Mr. Faulkner, I get the impression, is a Mississippi hill billy, and probably is a great artist who honestly portrays the hill billy life he knows, which is fine, but if he will just reserve the same for himself and those who like to learn about it through his books, that will be fine, and save me a great deal of wasted time in not having to try to absorb the stuff on my own hook.

And thanks, too, for the details regarding Mr. Shaw. I love the picture you presented of the wreath of Rosemary from Ellen Terry's garden as being the only floral offerings appearing on the casket. I think that is ever so nice. It will be interesting to learn something of the details of his will when it becomes available. I suppose he will disappoint everyone by having contrived one that is so prosaic that everyone will remark upon its dullness. Still it will be interesting to learn what such an eccentric man, and one so imaginative, may turn out when it comes to drawing up a document that will dispose of such a large fortune as he probably died possessed of.

And thanks for the clipping about the new Parrish item. I am glad you quoted the lines and I shall, I hope, before the night has gone, be able to run through the clipping you sent concerning the publication. And what with Anne owning the Boswell chair, it is heartening to learn that publication of the first volume of the Boswell Journal has appeared. The year 1762 ought to offer much. I don't recall if Boswell ever traveled on the continent, but since nearly everyone of that era did, it may be that a Journal for such a jaunt will turn up. Let us hope he did go to Versailles and wrote down much about what he saw.

And speaking of Versailles recalls to mind that I read a little more last night from the Zweig volume. I am so glad I am reading it, for thanks to it, - and I know not precisely how, the whole business of the Queen and Fersen comes so much better into focus, and at long last I am quite capable of appreciating her last years and how she had all the courage to carry through her super-human task of living, - and dying, for now, and almost for the first time, I fully realize that all this was possible because she really had one person in the world who loved her, - and she knew it, - and thus all things were possible, and the horrors didn't count, what with the most important thing in life always and forever in her heart, - knowing always, as she must have, that there was one who understood and loved her wholeheartedly.

Well, Lord, here it is Friday night with a fine moon, and a bevy of Texas numbers all sitting up in Marshall I reckon. All I know is that I am sitting down here in Lucca, chatting with you, and entranced with the whole business.....

4524 Lucille Cassey 11/14

Sunday, November 19th, 1950. To Miss Shaw
How nice to have your elegant letter in Saturday's post,
and first off let me thank you for having pruned the Chambers
letter. You were quite right in questioning the advisability
of including this material, and I think it would be best to
eliminate all three paragraphs.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your elegant letter in Saturday's post,
and first off let me thank you for having pruned the Chambers
letter. You were quite right in questioning the advisability
of including this material, and I think it would be best to
eliminate all three paragraphs.

The thought occurred to me the other day that some publicity
in the Times Picayune "Magazine" section might be desirable to keep
the Melrose name green in the minds of the general public and to
contrive a few articles that would give just enough particulars about
one subject or another that would, it is to be hoped, whet the
appetite of the readers for more information. And so I contacted
Mrs. Holoman who came Saturday afternoon and I dictated two
articles for the Picayune and one for the Negro Digest, and shall
dictate another article for the Picayune within another week or
ten days. I have insisted that she present these to me after
transcript from her notes so that I can properly correct them
and get the slat in just the proper fashion for the purpose we
have in mind. She wanted to send them to the Picayune all in
one batch, but it is better, to my way of thinking, to let
them have them one at a time and at definite intervals, for
the filing system of the Picayune might be of such a nature as
to swallow up the whole business, were three submitted at the
same time. Another consideration, of course, is the fact that
all three will revolve about Melrose, and if sent together,
the subject matter might seem too concentrated, don't you think.

I dictated from 1 until 5 and was taking off my beard just
before the supper bell when the most interred party dropped by
to advise me that Miss Tillinghast was on the river and was
expressing the desire to pass this way within half an hour.
After supper I was galloping along on this machine when the same
informant returned, - about 8 I guess, saying there were a
couple of other ladies and gentlemen at one of the camps just
below Clemence's, and would I care to entertain them if they passed
this way. I would not. And so my informant bowed and drove me
to the camp where conversation was brisk but dull and where
supper was being prepared for 10 o'clock. At 9:30 I announced
it was time for me to withdraw and so my informant drove me back
to the front gate. I like the idea of being able thus to divest

one's self of dull people at will, and it will always be my policy, not always possible to effect, of keeping such gatherings where they originate and not transferred to this place at least for I like the freedom of being able to pull out at random, which is so much easier than pushing out others to effect peace.

I dined with Celeste and Madam Regard this noon. They explained that J. J. had had to go to New Orleans this morning.

The weather continues too warm with high winds from the direction of the Gulf blowing all day, and I pregnated with dust and dried leaves and reminding me of the appearance of the metropolitan sky a few weeks back when the dust bowl was blowing in your direction.

The pilgrimage business was fairly active, - a group of Southern Telephone officials, Southwestern State College and two different group of youths and maidens from the local college.

Right now there is a party going on across the fence, including the George Buttons from town and a displaced Polish physician and spouse and heaven knows who all, probably, however, some of the Holy Ghosts from across the river. I was hidden to the party with the explanation that the people indicated above were especially anxious to see me, but naturally I declined. From dawn to dusk I am pretty much available, when once the curtain of night descends, my day is done so far as bending biscuits with the socially minded white folks.

After withdrawing from the Tillinghast department, I was glad to call it a day, collapsing in the corner and operating my Reading Machine until I had completed Mr. "Zweweeg's" opus. Even though Dr. Franklin didn't get mentioned and nothing was said about Mr. Jefferson and his Declaration of Independence, - two elements, it seems to me having a profound influence on the historic trends carrying Marie Antoinette to the scaffold, still I think in spite of these silences, it is the best biography of the Queen I ever read. I had rather expected Zweig to tell the story of the ring given Fersen by the Queen, - the ring he was wearing at the time of his murder when his hand was lopped off by a fisherman and carried aboard his fishing smack. You recall a tempest arose shortly after the fisherman put out to sea, and the hand bearing the ring was tossed into the ocean, since it was thought to be its presence in the boat that had begotten the storm that was likely to sink the boat, and how a little later a citizen of Stockholm, or was it Christiansa, after taking home a fish purchased on the open market, had discovered the ring inside the fish. The ring was eventually turned over to the proper authorities and today is a prized item in one of Sweden's museums.....

*Suggestion about
instruction of students*

Monday, November 20th, 1950

Memorandum:

May I tell you that the package came today, containing the double sets of everything, so typical of your thoughtfulness and kindness for me. Joe isn't going to be more tickled than am I with the Uncle Israel, nor is --even though the English be quaint, the Historical Society with its elegant assortment. Having made these in sizes approximating the average

post card gives an example equally characteristic of your thoughtfulness and thereby provides me with an excellent idea of what the eventual card may suggest. I am especially delighted to see how nicely the end paper turned out, for it seems remarkably clear and the charm of the original is just as delightful in this small reproduction.

A nice little shower this morning sent me scurrying back to Ucca from Arenbourg and the sultriness of early morning changed into cooler atmosphere as the rain ceased and the sun came out around 10. Tonight the moonlight is so splendid I feel almost tempted to type on the gallery, and I am goaded in that direction not only on account of the beauty of the night but also because by some unfortunate chance in air currents impells Grandpa to seep up through the floor and the atmosphere, in spite of the big bowl of narcissus here on my desk before me, is of a fragrance suggestive of the Chapel at Versailles on the day when during the funeral services of la Grande Mademoiselle, the urn holding her entrails suddenly exploded, spewing the decomposing contents all over the assembly. I think it was Saint Simon who described it as "a stench terrific and intolerable", and I know precisely what he was talking about.

For some time I have been playing possum, awaiting the inevitable visit of one of the most influential members of the college faculty to pass this way uninvited. He and his wife came late this afternoon, bringing a couple from the State of Washington as pilgrims. The Natchitoches number is Dr. John Ayser a geographic and historical enthusiast.

He has been instrumental in initiating certain new twists in college circles, and casually enough I set him to believing he was exploring a new path into which I had led him without him realising that I had set his feet down the avenue of my choice.

3524

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My idea is this: - since everybody graduating from the local college ought to have some vague grasp about the neighborhood in which they pass 4 to 6 years of study, and since I think all of the students ought to get a glimpse, sooner or later of Melrose, and since I have to contend with quite a number of them regardless during the year anyway, I ought to sell the President of the College and members of the Board that another item should be included in the school calendar. I proceed on the theory that while in the old days, explorers of a scientific bent used to undertake to examine a whole jungle, experts like Dr. Beebe take but a limited acre or two of said jungle, and by concentrating on it, succeed in comprehending the entire expanse more thoroughly by merely examining a limited area than would ever be assimilated, were all their energies dissipated by attempting to swallow the whole mass at a single gulp.

With this as a pattern, not only the local college, but every college in the country ought to insist upon students before graduating assimilate a little section of the neighborhood in which they pass at least 4 years of their student lives. Melrose locally, of course, would serve as the acre, and I would serve as the instructor. I suppose there are about 30 weeks during the school year and 300 or 500 graduating each semestre. By limiting my weekly class to 10 or 15, I could give them a couple of hours once a week, - but only one attendance at this particular class for the entire semestre.

Dr. Kyser jumped at the suggestion, declaring forthwith it would be ~~max~~ one of the most beneficial courses of instruction that could possibly be presented, since it would give all graduates a glimpse at a way of life and a hint at a variety of means of happiness that ought to be but usually isn't up in front of the reasons for formal education.

The idea of a college having a course requiring attendance by the students to but a single lecture in the 4 or 6 years of their studies sounds revolutionary that it may well not be grasped by those in control, although if the pedagogues can't put it over under their own steam, it is quite possible the politicians could be brought in to line to impose the thing from the outside. I should prefer to have it put over, however, without the aid of the politicians, and so we shall see what we shall see, and after that will take the next step. It seems to me it ought to give the college its money's worth, so far as value to the students are concerned, and since I am bound to contend with some of these people any way, I think it an excellent idea as a means of receiving a professors salary without ever having to become a professor. Isn't it remarkable what things people can think up, and yet I hope this one doesn't seem too crack-pot.

What you say.....

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4528

Historical Quarterlies was intended in the 9:45 Time Table. Perhaps "Historical Magazines" or "Publications" or some such would be better. Your own excellent judgement will determine. "Historical Qualities" must have certainly looked hilarious.

Robina 11/12
Dora 11/15

Thursday, November 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

So many blessings all in one post, - and how can I say Thank You.

I opened the package when I returned from the Post Office. What a wealth of advertising material for our side, and how nice of you to bounce them so generously and with such amplitude in my direction. I think you were so right about the sun dial shots. The frame seems to do something about it that is good and I don't think the margin matters a whit, - how ever much that may be. As for the likeness you took of the author, I like it and the light side balances so nicely with the shadows on the opposite, that I think the whole thing is just perfect.

And thanks endlessly for your grand communications of Friday and Saturday. It is nice to have news all round, both of your doings and those of your neighbors. It is curious how the narcissus act up in these parts. Some of them are in bloom, and those surrounding the sun dial haven't even pushed up 2 inches as yet. Why some should be so far out in front and others so inclined to dilly-dally, I can't imagine. Don't you love that word, - "dilly-dally".

Marvelous it is that you aren't to get all of the Southern hemisphere on top of you Thursday. Thank heavens some of them are going to stay put or wander in other directions, for even so, what with the crowd you will have, your wrestling with the turkey will be wearing enough.

And what a business that was about the night prowler next door. Thank heaven it ended as it did with nothing more than a fright. It isn't a bad idea to have those gagets on the windows that prevent them from being raised beyond a certain point. They used to work on window frames of the old variety, but perhaps they don't on the modern metal ones. It would be nice to know you all had them, if they are available. -- some gaget screwed in on the frame inside that can be locked at any point desired. Another reassuring thing is that after such an unsuccessful attempt, the prowler will probably never try that particular address again.

I don't know why, but I dropped Anne Parrish a note last night, asking her if she had any good addresses in the Harper department. I believe it is Harper that Carolyn recommended, but I thought it might be nice to contact la Georgetown on the matter, too, since I believe she is an old Harper stand-by, and perhaps if something should freeze in lower Fifth Avenue in the Latham section, it might be nice to have another interesting approach further up town.

8526

4529

A note from Harry Smith indicates I may expect to receive the two or three things he still has to send me, and I shall have the captions pretty well ready so they may go forward without delay once they are here. There may be a bit of hurly burly, what with the holiday interlude just ahead, but with the Wenks arriving on the morrow and the Gene al on Saturday, at least the visit of the former will not extend more than two or three days.

I am glad you found the portraits alright, - I mean the article. If you feel, on re-reading, a few extra phrases should be added about either Lion or Feuille or Serville, or whatever, you will, of course, feel perfectly free to do so. As I recall, Mr. Landsford's letter of some time back gave some particulars about the address of both men, and indicated the brother of the man who painted Grandpere was engraver in the New Orleans Federal Mint, but aside from enhancing interest in the painter, that really isn't of prime importance, since it is the history of that portrait rather than data concerning the painter that is primary. I suppose the mix up in names is due to the restoration, when probably the restoring artist didn't know the actual name of the original painter. I'm glad you liked what I had Mme. Aubin-Rogue say regarding Grandpere's alarming speed of disintegration. I think the Madam and Lyle would have liked that line, too.

Sarah Jones of the Baton Rouge office of the State Library telephoned me this morning, saying she would love to come by to see me tomorrow for a purely social chat. I recommended today instead, what with Shreveport moving in this direction 24 hours hence, and so she came around 2 with her mother and sat until 5, which was long enough, but it was pleasant. She said Essie Mae is quite dissatisfied with what she has been doing on the article about the Madam and her books, and is trying it over again. From that and the observations made by our correspondent in the enclosed letter confirms the difficulties in counting on items from such quarters. I had asked Robina to send me some typewriter ribbons, and so, if we survive the impending week end, the present fade out may be corrected.

I am so glad to have particulars regarding the various members of the Roosevelt family which you were so kind as to pass along to bring me up to date on such personalities. I want to talk further on one or two points in "This I Remember", but I shall do so at a subsequent go-round.

I wish you could see my bed from where I sit. I have all the nice thin recently received from your true hand, scattered all over it, from Uncle Israel's slap on around the personalities and places that represent everything that means so much to me because they all are little bits of you....

1831

4530 *King Solomon*

Wednesday, November 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

The advent of one bag with three offspring and a dappled dachshund seems to have tipped the scales against the appearance of any secretaries whatsoever.

But the mail was light, save for the Smith photos, - five in number, I guess, and so I have done the captions for them but shall hold them until Friday, hoping to be able to run through the captions before putting the package in the post for you.

I neglected to say in my last letter how glad I am you had such a pleasant contact with Egon. Surely the group he spoke to on the island on the subject of birds was fortunate. I can just imagine how delightful he must have been, and especially so if he just let himself go, for his enthusiasm is always as arresting and entertaining as whatever subject on which he may touch.

Of late, as you may have noticed, I have been reading a page from one book and another from another, so that only last night did I finish "High Jungle" by Dr. Beebe, which has somehow been sandwiched in between Mrs. Roosevelt and Marie Antoinette.

I thought you might like to recommend the "High Jungle" business to Egon if, indeed, he hasn't already read it. There are some fascinating stories about birds and insects shortly after the opening chapter or two, and the insect business in particular grows more fulsome as the volume approaches its finish.

In the latter part, the author speaks of insect migrations of which I had never thought much until I learned a few months back that the United States this year by its D. D. T. program down Mexico way stopped the migration of the caterpillar so that there were none in this region at all this year. Dr. Beebe doesn't go into such matters at all, but he does remark upon the migrations, as observed at Rancho Grande some 15 miles from Maracaibo, or however one spells the name of that Venezuelan city.

My guess is that Egon might find much material for regaling his youthful audiences in such a volume, and I think it great fun to be able to pass data covering such items along to people who might find some data for everybody's ultimate enjoyment.

4531

4531

Pat got home from Law School along about supper time, and will leave early Friday morning for the Houston area to visit Eugenia and Joe. He is taking Uncle Israel with him and that will please Joe who was so fond of good old Uncle Israel. And speaking of that gift on your part, reminds me to remark that I haven't heard a peep out of Beaufort as yet. But never having received a scratch from Beth's pen, I am not surprised if she dwaddles about making acknowledgement of your gift to you. I never cease to be amazed at the fun people wilfully throw away by neglecting to take pen in hand.

Tonight's broadcasts from Texas and Louisiana are busy warning go-away-week-enders that a mighty blast of cold is advancing mightily in this direction. Iowa is down to the zero neighborhood and the Texas Panhandle will start shrivelling

tonight, with freezing conditions reaching us on Friday. I have in mind to use this information to wedge out the Shreveport contingent, for it would be too bad if their water pipes should burst during their absence, don't you yoh think so.

In the Smith photos, going forward in a day or so, I have made a note on the caption sheet covering the illustration showing the wooden bars at Yucca. As suggested on the reverse of the page, it would seem the quotation from the Chase Diary would be most illuminating with this picture. I suppose, however, that unless a finer type is used in printing the excerpt from the Diary, some of it will have to be cut. If such be the case, perhaps the part about the difficulty of obtaining drinking water should be marked for elimination. It is possible, however, that an enterprising Editor can figure some means of including the whole thing.

Footnotes
identifying
correspon-
dents

And you mention the wisdom of identifying the Madam's correspondents, and I think this an admirable suggestion. The idea of doings so by means of an asterisk with a footnote of explanation would probably be the most satisfactory. On the morrow, if not too gummed up by all the doings around here, I shall jot down some particulars about Mr. Bachelier and others. I suppose these footnotes might be clipped to the first page of the respective letters, even though footnotes are usually put in with the text immediately after the asterisk, - the printer knowing to properly place them at the bottom of the page. An hilarious case in point where some untutored type setter didn't know about this custom appears in that volume of Madames Marshall and Evans: "They Found It In 'atchez", where the footnote were put slap into the text, if memory serves, and the effect was miserable. Do hope your turkey doesn't get you down.....

4532

4532

Thursday, November 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum

You see..... And it was so kind of you, and yet my face is so enflamed.

It's a bit humiliating, too, in coming to the evident conclusion that I am again loosing my mind. My only hope is that since the letter was dated on Saturday, I did not, perhaps, do any switching, for I usually do not write letters on that date.

I had a letter the other day from Shreveport, perhaps I sent it along, wherein the lady remarked she would be glad to take care of "the matter" for me, and I assumed she referred to the ribbon. Now I am wondering if she got the letter intended for her and if she did not, what I might have asked her to do for me. Perhaps it was something about giving Miss William a chunk, or some such, - I hope.

But how terribly nice of you to send this ribbon a-jumpin', and how nice of your to send along the little note with the enclosures. I can readily imagine how difficult it may be to attempt correspondence with a dragon "hoovering" about. Still I did appreciate your message for Thanksgiving which reached me slap on the precise date.

As I try to figure out how I went wr ng with the address, I assume I had you in mind as I went into such endless detail about Mr. Caine and Mr. Landsford, - two subjects that would be of scant interest to Robina, except that she might get a glimmer of interest because of her acquaintance with this neighborhood and the pictures Mr. Landsford examined. But I reckon my thoughts must have been turned in your direction as I wrote, and unquestionably they were when I made out the envelope.

I am sorry your week end provided little opportunity for doing the billion things I know you should have liked to do. And I reckon today has been scarcely better, assuming today is really Thanksgiving, as I guess it is all over the nation.

We dined across the fence, and the food was marvelous and the company dull as could be. Everyone, save one, declined a highball before dinner, and that one requested a second, which seemed a little out of order. The 3 offspring and the 2 nephews ate in the living room, leaving the grownups for the dining room, and everything went off nicely. I catapulted right after dinner, however,

4533

as I had a couple of men to help me at Arenbourg and I didn't want to dwaddle over coffee naturally.

About supper time Irma Somperyac passed by to say Happy Thanksgiving and to ask if she might see me sometime before Christmas. She was driving a new Oldsmobile which she had acquired while visiting her mother-in-law in New York. It seems some of the servants were selling chances on a car, and Irma won. Twenty seven hundred dollars worth of car sounded like a lucky lottery that time, so far as she was concerned. But wouldn't a Louisiana number win a car thus raffled off in Manhattan.

Had a note from Rudolph who was driving 570 miles on Wednesday to be with his parents in New Mexico for Thanksgiving. He will make the return drive on Sunday, - and he can have it all, for I should not relish such a jaunt all in a single hop.

The weather is wonderful, all sunshine today with the thermometer in the 70's, and tonight a full moon in a perfectly cloudless sky. The radio continues to threaten us with showers before morning and a drop in the temperature to some 20 odd degrees, which seems to be so unlikely, what with all the doors and windows open tonight and a lovely gentle breeze stirring from the South.

Another side light on local Welfare may be cited in the case of a lady on the rolls, possessed of 6 children, a car and a "hlepser" as unmarried spouses are styled. The Welfare checks usually arrive on the 21st, and as her birthday is the 23rd, she has taken over Alfred Llorenz's honkey-tonk, just above Arenbourg for tonight where she is throwing a birthday party for herself and inviting numerless local gals and swain. A gramophone supplies the music, and the giver of the party provides the beer, wine and whiskey. It's a curious commentary on the times in which we live. I still believe in Welfare with all my heart, and I don't know the answer to its proper administration, but, even as in any Governmental form, one would have to be blind indeed if unable to recognize flaws along the line.

The attached sheet of suggested footnotes doesn't cover the required list, but I forget the others, and so if you will kindly mention them, I shall send along the balance. I began by making the individual notes, too long, so the Bachelor item, especially, will need to be cut as appears proper to you.

I cannot close without apologizing for my error concerning the ribbon, and at the same time I want to tell you how much I appreciate your kindnesses in taking care of the whole business for me, once it had fallen into sympathetic hands. Somehow your kindness makes me almost not regret I was guilty of such clumsiness.....

4232

little photo of sunken garden
not included in
package

Mrs. Pillsbury 11/2

4534

Friday, November 24th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so the thermometer went tumbling down from 74 to 26 along about first day. Ice developed suddenly in all the bird baths and early dawn saw overcoats covering yesterday's shirt sleeves. Tonight the weather man promises a low of 20, which means the water system is out off, and that is always a bore. But I have already splashed through a bath and drawn a tub full of water on the assumption I may need some before morning. But let us hope a rise before another dawn may set the water system in functioning order again.

It is said Miss Kate Perkins is coming tomorrow, which will make a full day of talk, and in the evening the General will arrive. x It is pleasant to report that the Shreveport contingent left for home this morning at 9, and so, what with the cold to ward off road runners and the resulting quiet after yesterday, Peace reigned and I was able to get a lot of stuff attended to.

The batch of photographs will go forward either in Saturday's or Monday's post, depending on a flock of circumstances, so you should have them by the end of this coming week.

The cold brought plantation operations to a standstill, of course, and I can't remember seeing such a vacant store as I witnessed two or three times today. Where all "God's chillun" were hiding, I know not, but I imagine they were somewhere in-doors, hugging the fireplace, or out-doors, weiling an axe. I SA

I got off a letter to "r. Landsford and I am hoping it may bring forth a prompt reponse covering some of his knowledge on a point or two for the Picayune article and the Portraits we are contriving. In re-reading one of his earlier letters today, - October 29th, 1949, I believe it was, I notice he states two facts about Lion that seem to be at variance with some of our knowledge obtained from other quarters. In his letter he says Lion was born in Paris in 1810, which is definitely at variance with the Tinker article from the Print Room. And, if memory serves, the Metropolitan stated he had three pictures in the Paris Salon of 1825, which would seem odd, if the 1810 birth date is correct, and I doubt if any 15 year old youngster had three pictures in any Salon. And so I shall try to sware some of these points with Herr Landsford, and I shall of course pass along whatever comes to hand.

mail or course, pass along what ever comes to hand, to the
 Ambassador, and I shall send it along regardless
 of my not be read, but I shall send it along regardless
 of my own expert eye may determine, after you have been
 able to weight the staff agency to hand.

4535

The other day while doing the footnotes, I recalled
an old couplet as I wrote Rachel Field's name. It had to
do with her great uncle, the inventor, and ran like this:

"Old Cyrus Field, says he,
I have a funny notion;
I think I'll lay a telegraph
Across the Atlantic Ocean."

Wasn't that silly.

As I turned this page, I sampled the air waves to see
what I could find about the forward surge of the cold wave.
Of places in the Gulf States, the thermometer readings for
tonight sound odd, as for example, New Orleans will touch but 34
while Mobile will sink to 14 and Atlanta will slip to 4,
indicating, I suppose, that the intensity of the on-slaught
will pass to the East of Louisiana. I have known Mobile, as
have you, in summer, and it is difficult to picture
the place suffering from such a frigid complex.

It is equally difficult for me to picture the state of
mind of 8,000 people whose voices I could hear issuing
from the loud speaker, - 8,000 people in a 26 degree
thermometer reading, disporting themselves in the
grandstands at L. S. U. observing the local football
team contend with some place called Willa Nova, or some
such. Surely the liquor business must have been good
in that neighborhood tonight, or the hospitals will be
busy enough on the morrow with pneumonia patients.
Isn't it wonderful to what lengths of physical inconvenience
people will put themselves in the name of enthusiasm for sports.

As I ran through the photographs going forward to you
shortly, I thought of how much fun it would be fitting
them into the proper places in the manuscript.

It seems to me the Madam's activities ought to fall
pretty readily into the general section of the big house
along with the Weaving House, Bindery and Studio,
with that section of the book being the main bulk, I suppose.

If Clemence and her doings and the story of Emma are
placed under the African House that ought to give that
section a modest layout, and I suppose the sheer photographic
material will represent Yucca. There are one or two photographs
to go into that section, which, of course will include the
Portraits, that I am not certain about. There is a little
one showing the sunken garden at the West End of Yucca which may
or may not be used, but I shall send it along regardless, and
your own expert eye may determine, after you have been
able to weight the stuff already to hand.....

4536

Forest of Scrapbook
re: Library: first blow.

Sunday, November 26th, 1950.

Memorandum;

How nice to have your Tuesday letter in Saturday's post.

In response to your inquiry regarding the use of the July
entry, regarding table cloth and all. - Yes, -- use
the whole thing as is.

I am glad you mentioned Children of Stranger's article.
I shall check up on it and see it goes forward immediately. Frankly
I thought it had, but it must be I switched it into my folio.

Under separate envelope I am sending the Trichell article.
It seems to me just the type of thing we want. The personal touch
gives it a liveliness that is breezy, while the humor concerning
the first white iris is perfect. If little Miss Dormon does half
as well, that will be splendid.

I have already advised that the photographs are going forward
in the same mail with this letter, so you should have them to hand
forthwith.

In Saturday's post came a copy of the Appleby Cappel book from
Anne. Had she not penned my name in the front of it, I should
respond to my immediate impulse to send it along to you. But
as I am not certain about the wisdom of so doing, under the
circumstances, perhaps I had better hold it. In all such matters
it would afford me so much pleasure to share these items with you,
and building our Arenbourg library both in Manhattan and Melrose
seems quite logical. But I realize that in cases where too
much is written in the dedication, it is perhaps easier all around
for such items to be placed on "the holding shelf" at
this point.

As we contemplate the format for the Plantation Scrapbook,
we are bound to take especial interest in every contemporary volume
coming to hand, and I must say the latest Parrish opus appears quite
grand. What with the wealth of illustrations scattered through it,
I take it the printing job must have been quite expensive. I
envision the Scrapbook as somewhere between the Appleby Cappel item
and say the Hastings House Natches item, and would not, I should
imagine cost nearly so much to print.

I have no idea of the Parrish item's cost, but imagine it
is rather on the up and up, and of course it is to be hoped the Scrapbook
may be set forth at a comparatively moderate figure for greater sales.

4537

It goes without saying, of course, that my thoughts have been constantly with you this week end, as the rain has so vividly described the high winds of hurricane dimensions that swept your area. I am hoping you didn't have to be out in any of it. I shall be so glad to be re-assured by your next letter.

On the home front the cold continued, but has slightly warmed. In the visitor's section, the General and spouse came for Saturday night supper and left this Sunday afternoon. At dinner I was mildly shocked when Dan proposed all the library be given some institution. He had found a book in his room that sometime during the past couple of years had been gnawed on one corner by a rat. He seemed to convince the General the library should be disposed of, possibly to L. S. U. After the matter had been pretty much agreed on by the two of them, my opinion was asked. I need not say I did not endorse the plan. I further pointed out that as I saw it, the library fell into three parts, the Louisiana publications, the general subject matter and the Scrapbooks. As regards the latter I stated frankly and with some vigor that I felt they were in quite a different class from the other items, in as much as the others were items written and published by others and collected by the "adam", while the Scrapbooks had been compiled by her and represented her own creation and accordingly so long as Melrose remained as suggestive of her life and activities, I thought they should not be included in the gift but should remain here.

I think this may have made some impression on the General, but it certainly didn't on Dan, Payne or Payne's wife or the General's.

J. A. wasn't present, but I shall sing my song again for him on the morrow.

In view of these circumstances, I think any items not at present on the Melrose shelves should remain indefinitely where they currently find themselves.

In the material which has gone forward to you by today's post, I have been unable to go over but one or two of the captions, but I hope you will feel quite free to alter, revise or correct any points that seem out of line. I have also included the correspondence pages, leaving everything intact as received, without taking out the second sheets, fearing I might make an error and what with the hurly-burly obtaining about the place, I have been unable to get any assistance, and so I feel more secure knowing that you are getting both originals and duplicates rather than taking the chance that one or another might be entirely missing.

It was good to see the Bands this afternoon. They came for an hour just before sunset, affording me a fine opportunity to blow off steam. There was humor in the sourest of the library business, but I shall save that for another sitting. and Melrose, like Liberty, is something which must every day be fought for, and it's worth it.....

4538

re: Scrapbook: package of photos (rec'd)

Monday, November 27th, 1950.

Memorandum: Sent by mail on Sunday, Nov. 26, 1950. A few minutes before noon and quite a few minutes before noon.

It was SO GOOD, receiving your Wednesday letter in this morning's post. I was taken completely by surprise, for I had not supposed circumstances immediately during and following the Thanksgiving Day period would permit you to take pen in hand.

By chance, Log had dropped in to see me just before my secretary arrived, and so, on reading your letter, I was able to hand him his own likeness, and he asked me to say "Thank you, Ma'am and many howdies" on his part. He was tickled that you remembered him and to receive such an unexpected present. It is such a recompense to witness the pleasure, expressed by the enormous grin and the instant response of appreciation. If only Madam Cloutier might take a page from Log.

And for myself, may I say "Thank you, Ma'am and many howdies" for the Yucca prints. Frankly, I think the little shadow of light or shade down the middle is of no consequence. I like it just as it is, and since the illustration on the inside appears to me ever so much fainter in the Gilmore opus, I think the present one may be considered as probably by far the best to be obtained. Certainly own you an apology for the hodge-podge contents of the package forwarded to you in today's post. But in spite of the hurly-burly condition in which things went forward, they are at least on the way, - photographs and captions. In a separate gob is sufficient material for a scrapbook on this region generally. It has no bearing on our present efforts and may be pigeon-holed until sometime in the future when the pre-holiday season has long since passed and we all can relax a little. At the last moment this opportunity to forward the material presented itself and I accordingly made the most of it, feeling that you, as always, would understand and forgive the messy conglomeration. It seemed to me, in view of yesterday's rumblings, it would be an excellent opportunity to guarantee the material for our side.

In all the excitement, I think I did not attach the photographs of Uncle Israel, Josephine Monette and Yucca, the middle period, to the elongated caption or brief article devoted to Yucca during that phase of its development, but perhaps you will readily understand that those three pictures go with said Yucca, the Middle Period. I was interrupted twice while writing the thing and as I never had a chance to have it read back, I suppose it may be pretty wooden. Still, I thought it better to let it slide for later editing either by you or me, so that you may have the original draft to hand, should you care to have it to hand when discussing the book with some Latham or other.

8538

4539

0891, 4778 redmever, yabnol

It's always doubly interesting to be listening to programs when one sense a kindred soul is also tuned in. And last Tuesday's Bob Hope and Fibber McGee and Molly were a case in point. I found the Molly lines for the efforts of her husband in conducting the "Aunt Helen" column hilarious, and the way the whole piece came to an end was perfect.

Last night I spoke of the element of humor in the unpleasant discussion that closed Sunday's gathering at dinner. After having speculated on giving away one hundred thousand dollars worth of priceless volumes, the General, on quitting the dining room, asked me if he could see me for a moment on the front gallery. He led me to the room on the ground floor of the West tower, -- opposite that to the summer dining room. It was always used by the boys as an airy lounge in summer, and for the past 10 years, Pat has always stretched out on the comfortable swing in the room, and read himself into an half hour's siesta at noon, what with trashy cheap boy's books in a slatternly old bookcase the Madam had always kept there for just such a purpose. The General pointed to the books, -- and I chanced to notice one entitled "The Rover Boys", -- saying that he thought they would be better preserved if installed in the tower room above the summer dining room, and if I thought of it, would I ask three or four men to take them up there sometime before the damp weather set in.

Don't you love that.....tossing a hundred thousand dollars worth out of the window for now, apparant reason, and breaking down over the more sacred preservation of a dog flock on dishy old Rover Boys. When I saw the ladies across the fence at first dark, they were inclined to be mildly upset about the table conversation, but when I sprung The Rover Boys on them, even Celeste laughed.

I have waited until rather late before starting this letter, thinking my second secretary would be passing this way to give me a hand in a couple of items I hoped to enclose in this letter. But from other "passenger pigeons" I learn a carnival is going full blast at the local honkey-tonk, -- some kind of a tent show at Alphone's, hard by Arenbourg, and so I assume the secretary must have been fascinated by all the bright lights and gay music. And so I shall adjourn the two items appearing in the portion of the transcript attached in your letter of today, sending them along at my next sitting.

I cannot close without telling you again how grand it was having your unexpected letter today, and how it made my day so very, very happy.....

1121

Desk of Duncan Kirkland
Station of the Cross

Letter to the General re library
4540 11/28/50
(separate)

Tuesday, November 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

The weather is marvelous, and accordingly I couldn't resist the temptation to spend a while, both this morning and this afternoon, at Arenbourg.

Besides, I found an excuse for myself in not devoting all my time to the Underwood on the grounds that I couldn't write worth sour apples today anyway. And in proof thereof, I send along the attached transcript to the General, which, although I haven't read it, is probably about the worst piece of composition I ever growned out. But I sent the thing along to Baton Rouge regardless; for in spite of its outrageous English, mixed metaphors and heaven knows what all, I think it conveyed just the right kernel required at the present season. I remarked to J. H. that I had written his brother and since he is on our side, and accordingly sensed the burden of my message, he expressed his heartiest sympathy with my efforts but said he feared it was a losing battle. But it takes more than one battle to make a war, and I have just begun fighting.

What with the weather being fine, pilgrims were to be expected, and if I had to have any, I was glad they came when my brain was wool gathering. There were the Sharps, -- husband and wife, -- but actually their name was Harp, -- bankers or at least he is, from Fort Worth, and although they came with the Rands, it turned out that they knew Mary Dagget Lake, and so that great waltz went off swimmingly.

Dr. Rand seemed better than on Sunday but I must say Blythe looks a million years old. She has developed that tell-tale neck curve, or shoulder curve or whatever it is that Clemence caught so masterfully in some of her major creations. I suppose Blythe is perhaps 20 or 30 years younger than Madam Regard and looks old enough to be her grandmother. It's a pity she never has learned to slow down, -- up at 5, no mid-time relaxation and a dozen irons in the fire when not flying up and down the road, and entertaining at cares or some kind of a frolic until midnight, -- and the impress of exhaustion is unmistakable, but still she neither wishes nor wills to slow up. It seems such a pity, for so often such people don't have the luck to drop dead but rather to fall out half dead, and so languish on for years.

4541

It seems that Lucille's gift for the chapel came at just about the right season, for just before dawn today old Duncan Kirkland died at the age of 87. And it was Duncan who owned the Stations of the Cross business I have long hoped to add to the Chapel. And so I sent for Sam Peace who is a great crone of Duncan's son, Charlie, and commissioned Sam to undertake some negotiations on our behalf, promising him a pretty commission if he successfully concluded the business. Duncan's son lives in Alexandria while one of his two daughters lives in New York and the other in Shreveport or some such strange place. I am sure the Stations of the Cross means nothing to any of the children, and it would be a great pity for it to leave the Cane River country, if they really don't treasure it. Then, too, there is a charming portrait of one of the early Metoyers, - a boy of 10 or 12, with a butterfly poised on his finger, which is altogether charming. Lyle was always wild to have the picture, but Duncan, while caring nothing for it sentimentally, had some grossly exaggerated idea as to its value, and so Lyle got no where, as did the Madam, and the picture went from bad to worse, I suppose, in as much as it got scant consideration by Duncan. And so, in spite of the fact that I know nothing about its present condition, I appended that item as something to work on for Sam's program, and so we shall see what we shall see. I am

fiddling, too, on a long range line, for an oil of Grandpere's brother, Francois Gassion Metoyer, but the likelihood of a catch seems remote. We land none of these items, we shall have hazarded none of Lucille's gift. But if we gain any one of them, it will be in the nature of an historic prize that one day will lend a pleasing note to Arenbourg. I guess the Stations of the Cross thing is the most remarkable. Perhaps I have spoken of it before, - a mahogany carved wall bracket, perhaps 8 or 12 inches in height, with a little handle at the base by which one may turn the revolving disk above, so that, as I recall it, the individual station comes to the fore on the arrangement that vaguely suggests some sort of a sacred merry-go-round, if you can imagine such a thing. In any event, it is delicious, and let's "hold the thought".

I had to give an eye to some re-arrangements being made at the wash house and between Harps and Rands, Robert Deblieux (pronounced W.) the young Natchitoches artist, put in an appearance with a request to be permitted to draw the African House. He worked until dark, left his unfinished work with me, hoping to return some time next week to go further ahead with it. I may have mentioned as having passed this way a week or so ago with some other youths, when I asked him if he would name his first-begotten son Ailhand. He knows the old Ailhand Prudhomme family on the Joyous Coast, but somehow had never thought how delightful it would be to have a child whose first name was Ailhand (pronounced I. O.), so that in maturity, the child might cut out his signature from Ailhand Deblieux to just plain I. O. W.

Well, so much for such tomfoolery, and my headache has evaporated, and it has been nice having this little chat with you.....

4542

Carroll up the road

*card from Edith Holloman
11/26 (Natchez)
Robina 11/27 4542*

Wednesday, November 29th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I thought of you so often last night as I giggled through the Fibber McGee and Molly program, hoping you might be having the good luck to be listening to the nonsense. Surely there must be dozens of differing contributions to make a success for an half hour program. But in their case, while the musical interludes are pleasant, it seems to me that quite often the script is unusually good, as for example, when one is presented with the ultra silly notion that McGee would insist on sitting in his car until the full hour for which he had inserted his tax dime in the meter had run out. I suppose what makes that additionally funny is the fact that probably all of us have known some individual or other who has been just that determined to get his money's worth.

I heard part of the Bob Hope show, - the first part, which as all of his performances of late, was transcribed. I was impressed by the introduction when it was stated the broadcast transcribed was from some place or other in the State of Washington, and this was the more pertinent, I suppose, because during the afternoon two or three people had remarked that Bob Hope was appearing for his broadcast last night at Barksdale Field, some 90 odd miles up the road on the Southern outskirts of Shreveport. I suppose we shall be favored with that entertainment next Thursday, or Tuesday, rather, along about 5th.

On the local scene, the street fair or whatever they call the thing is going full tilt at Alphonse's. There seem to be about 8 or 10 trucks, each rigged up so that the side lets down making a little booth from which the games of chance are operated. The scoundrels were smart enough to tempt the local Holy Ghosts to endorse the fair, promising St. Augustin's 10 per cent of the profits. As all the business is conducted by charlatans who handle the money individually at each booth, I know not how the Reverend Fathers are going to find out what 10 percent of any sum would be. Of course the whole thing is a film-flam from beginning to end, and while the poor negroes and mulattoes are fools to be taken in by such chicanery, still it is an outrage to permit such outlaws to practice their arts on these simple minded folk.

The reason I missed part of the Bob Hope show was because Jolly-Boy, one of my Little River friends, tapped on my window. He had a problem he couldn't solve and so had turned to me for advise.

4543

It seems he had come out from his home to the store, bearing ten dollars in all, money belonging to his stepmother and one or two neighbors, with a list of things to buy at the store for them. But the store had closed when he arrived, and as everybody was heading toward the gay lights, he went along, and the first thing he knew, --the gambling looked so easy, as he explained, the hill billy had all the money, and then he didn't know what to do.

Smart me, I recommended that he go home and tell the people exactly what had happened, but that, of course, is easier said than done. I have no doubt the lesson may or may not have a salubrious effect, and he can eventually pay back the money, but nevertheless it's a shame that such business could operate, and of all things, with the blessings of the Church, for after all, when, -- as has too often happened since the world began, the Holy Ghosts, knowingly or in stupidity, begin working hand in glove with the Devil, the results have always been lamentable to say the least.

I learned of an old man who had been saving his cotton money for Christmas, but the street fair fleeced him of his entire wealth, totaling fifty dollars, -- and so they flock to the shearer and thus are they sheared. Poor lambs...

Today's post wasn't of much interest, although I did appreciate a little note from the Reverend Pompey M. Gillie, asking me to transmit a message to Dr. Rand on his behalf. The note was an appreciation of our visit to Rockford Church, and I thought of white folks who might take a couple of instructions in polite manners from the dusky Baptist preacher. I sent the note along to Dr. Rand, and probably shall not see it again, but if it comes to hand, I shall pass it along for our file.

I slept but indifferently last night, although a little tired physically after flying up and down the road yesterday. But I had a couple of unopened Talking Books and so I sampled them. One is an item entitled "Young Bess" by Erwin or Irwin, or some such, -- the childhood of Queen Elizabeth and seems as entrancing and colorful as the Luaghton presentation of Bess's papa, old Henry. And the other thing is called "The Free Man" by Richter, or some such, being an account of the colonial advent of the Palatinate Germans in Pennsylvania during the colonial period. It is novel in style, and short, but up until I began to read, it seemed pretty good.

The sky was overcast today and the air just cool enough to make physical labor a bracing business, and efforts at the Underwood alright, what with the butaine along side. I don't hope your hurly-burly week-end has played out, now that the week has again reached a middle, and may the impending one be all quiet and nice.....

4544

Essae Mae Culver

4544 write-up from Essae Mae Culver on Aunt Carrie Ethel Holloway 11/17

Thursday, November 30th, 1950.

Memorandum:

A week ago we were freezing and tonight all the doors and windows are open, -- and poor old Grandpa, he lingers on so mightily. According to Shreveport, today's thermometer reading was the highest in Shreveport history for November 30th. The promise for tomorrow is Fair and Warmer, and today it was in the 80's, -- and I must say I like it, -- if only I might give poor Grandpa a fine funeral.

And, as perhaps already noted, Essae Mae has at long last come across. It seems to be better than Miss Kate's effort, but scarcely up to Miss Lillian. Still, I think we can use it, although if you feel it requires editing a bit, I trust you will swing the blue pencil about with abandon, and anything you may do will be an improvement.

I have appended a brief line or two by way of introduction. The picture which we apparently aren't going to get from Caroline Ramsay, -- the Madam, book in lap, sitting before the book case, would be just the checker for the Essae Mae opus. But since we can't count on that, perhaps we may use both the one you had enlarged with her sitting at her scrapbook table, and the other illustration showing the case of scrapbooks. I tried to make the attached introduction a little different from the caption, as I recalled it, covering the scrapbooks in their cases, but if I repeated myself in these, you will of course feel quite free to strike out in which ever seems better the stuff that is re-hashed.

I am glad Essae Mae and Lois got to see little Dr. Miller, for I know their visit did her a world of good. I gather from Essae Mae's note that she is threatening to pass this way before long, and I shall be glad to compare notes with her once more.

As for the other enclosure from la belle Holoman, it is certainly a masterpiece. I shall take Underwood in hand shortly to tell her that Rebecca Gustine Minor was no Lintot, but I shall be careful to omit the name Gustine, just to annoy la Holoman, since by telling her whom the lady was not but failing to acquaint her with her true identity, she will be slap up a tree.

And by the time I get through telling her that Lyle Saxon didn't write Natchez-on-the-Mississippi, I'll bet a dollar she will never again try to pin that book on him. Then, too, there is a marvelous opportunity for me to restrain myself in not going in to

4545

strange family relations, since she, herself is her own sister's daughter-in-law by marriage, and since her sister married her father-in-law, la Holoman's son turns out to be and at the same time, his aunt's grandson and her son, to boot, since during the late summer, the grandfather took out adoption papers for his grandchild. And if that weren't enough of a mess, she has the nerve to tell me that Rebecca Lintot who married a child of Stephen Minor, was sister of the Yellow Duchess, who was Stephen Minor's wife. It may be that some people are brothers-in-law to their grandfather, but that is a new one on me, - and in spite of her marital distinctions, to Ethel Holoman, too, I fancy.

Well, Lord, all this tomfoolery, and it all boils down to the old adage: "One's a fool to fool with a fool". thereby letting me slap out.

Celeste honored me with a visit today at the same moment the Knipmeyers arrived, and her presence here gave me an opportunity to devote a couple of brief seconds with some lovely people from Denver who had arrived at the same moment the Knipmeyers came. The Denver people are the type from whom we shall hear, I feel sure, and therefore I regretted the pile up and resulting brevity of the greeting.

On the home front, the local street fair or carnival as it seems to be called, jogs along merrily. I was unkind when I denounced the endorsement of the dirty business by the Reverend Fathers, for Celeste bristled when I expressed regret that from the pulpit or altar words should be enunciated recommending such entertainment to the faithful. Last night in one of the games of chance a member of St. Augustin's Church got hooked for sixty dollars. He is a boy who is trying to keep the home fires burning, after his father, Jodey Roque got his head cut off a year or so ago. Thus the boy who is running his father's garage is a great grandson of Madame Aubin Roque and grandso of Denny, -- but no kin to Lyle.

Raymond Brazaele (I wish I knew how to spell that name) came to see me early this morning. I believe he was waiting J. H.'s return from some place, and so passed by to get caught up on conversation. The last time I had chatted with him was at the air port in town where "r. Belle and I passed by one day when the latter wanted to rent a plane for a little spin around. But somehow Raymond keeps up with me and my doings, - probably in part at least because he is sometimes in one of the planes brushing off the Yucca roof at cotton dusting time. I thought the opportunity an excellent one to inquire about aerial photography. Something tells me it wouldn't be bad to have a shot of the gardens from the air, don't you think so.....

at event, oct, next, and no good said nig of yit kings seven of ni guloz jon ni lissay wraian of am rit yfianzooqo suoleviam a

4546 Sarah Irvie Jones
Dora 11/18 11/30
King Solomon 11/26
Anne Parrish 11/27

Friday, December 1st, 1950.

Memorandum: I cannot tell you how delighted I am to have your Monday letter.

Faith helps out much when one's thoughts dwell constantly with those far away when the radio screams disaster, and I must confess that I have thought of you constantly since the big wind began blowing a week ago. Other distractions, such as Sunday's library talk, seemed important, but not at all so important as other things on my mind, and, how impressed I was by the realization bearing down on me that after all is said and done it isn't things, even when they are symbols, that count for anything when contrasted with people.

Lexington Avenue must have been a sight. I hadn't heard about store windows being smashed, although there was some account of the Empire State building being effected.

If memory serves, I believe I was here when the big wind of 1938 carried on so high in New York and New England. How much nearer all that seems than it does now. Isn't it wonderful how circumstances can eliminate all feelings of distance.

Of the enclosures, the Anne Parrish number may be nice to preserve for a bit with a possible view to future reference. I think, should a Harper contact seem advisable, should the Latham business lag, we might suggest a Georgetown note with a view to creating interest in the item in advance of a preliminary view, should we need to tap on that window.

From Sarah's letter, it would seem that J. H. is on some library board or other, but he is such a sight, he never mentions such matters. A supper tonight he remarked that he had dropped in to see Earle Long at his shack on his Winfield farm this morning. He said the Governor is always the same, incapable of ever saying anything but always ready to grunt about anything. He thinks he is possessed of about the worst disposition of anyone he knows. He said Earle showed him how arthritis was enlarging the joints of his fingers and was complaining about things and people in general, and particularly about "niggers" whom he uses only for political purposes. He said that while Earle has a fine house in Audubon Park in New Orleans, he lives in a wacky old cabin when on his Winfield farm that looks worse than any between the Elrose store and the bridge. The latter is played up at voting seasons but the

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4547

Friday, December 1st, 1950

New Orleans residence, naturally, is never mentioned.

This morning I did some gardening at Yucca just before noon mail time when I heard an old airplane buzzing around quite high overhead. I threw down an oversized white handkerchief beside me as I tussled with some banana plants I was getting ready to transport to Arenbourg. I don't know if my gesture was timely or not. Later I had a telephone saying the photographic mission was carried out to the satisfaction of the people in the plane, and so, eventually, perhaps, we shall have an opportunity to judge for ourselves. In the odds and ends department of the news, my agents report that one of the Holy Ghost Fathers lent his blessings to the local carnival by attending in person last night and trying his hand at gambling at bit. He ran up a loss of one hundred dollars in a jiffy, but the kind hearted operators of the shadey business munificently handed back the money, so it appears there is honor among thieves and the clergy in this instance anyway.

I was supposed to have a flock of people this afternoon but nobody showed up, which suited me. A T. Log dropped by for a few minutes and said he is moving just up the road a piece from his present house, but on the opposite side of the road. There is a little strip in there, run by some of the mulatto Morins, for a Matchitoches banker, and how it ever escaped being absorbed by the ever expanding Melrose, I never did understand. And so while strictly speaking the Dark Duke will not be on Melrose, he will in reality have moved a little closer in this direction, and probably next year will be back on Melrose again. I may have mentioned the site of the old Francois Cassion Metoyer house one dusky evening in June when an automobile was kicking up dust in passing, about 500 years before reaching the spillway, and that is where Log will take up his residence. At 7:15 tomorrow night, the seasonal electrical decorations are turned on in town. There have been the usual invitations to dine in town and the usual regrets. I am going to make it a point to dash in to view the business sometime during the holiday period, for much thought and time during the year are devoted to this annual effort, and people come from lots of Texas cities, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi and from as far South as New Orleans to view the spectacle. The official pressing of the button is prefaced on this Saturday by a huge display of fireworks, which may be a little dampened this year, what with the promise of rain for to-morrow afternoon. But while the fireworks are imposing, it is the electric lighting, and especially along Cane River where the lights are doubled by their reflections in the water, that is really the big thing. I remember it rained last year, for the Whintays of New Orleans were here for the occasion and well do

4548

out of Dr. & Mrs. Sitkin.

Laratz Kleiser
Art exhibit.

4548

Sunday, December 3rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

I'm wondering what luck you are having in trying to keep up with those four pianos that seem forever to be flying around the days of the week and the hours of the clock.

It is precisely 2 minutes after 9 p.m., and quite by chance at 8:30 I stumbled over the quartet going a mile a minute over the National station of W H O, Des Moines. I thought the thing was not a re-broadcast, but I am not sure, for I missed both the opening and closing announcements. If, through all the excitement of the Thanksgiving holiday, you lost track of that elusive foresome, or should I say foursome, perhaps you will catch up again with them on Sunday evening along about 9:30 your time, if, indeed, they haven't flitted on to some other day and hour by the time this note reaches your true hand.

And while another matter is on my mind, may I tell you that at the same time I post this letter on the morrow, I shall also send along a parcel post package in the nature of a Christmas gift. The box isn't too heavy, and I have inserted a couple of paper bags, so you may the more readily transfer the contents to same, if that seems desirable. It certainly seems to be rushing the season to launch this item at this early date, but I take a word of precaution from the radio admonitions to mail thin s early, and as the package contains something that might dampen things a bit if crushed, it seemed a likely time to get ahead of the rush, and so I am doing so, with apologies for having spoiled Christmas by getting so far ahead.

Saturday was cloudy, warm and humid, with the usual amount of pilgrims that invariably put in an appearance on the week end in which the Matchitoches fireworks and holiday lighting features are inaugurated. I enjoyed Dr. and Mrs. Sitkin or however they spell their names, most. He is the head of the History department of A. S. U., a native of South Carolina while his wife is from Virginia. Naturally they were entranced with what they had to see at Melrose, as were some other historians, Bill Adams, and

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other historically minded people passing this way. There were several groups who were turned back at the gate after 3:30 or 4:00 when Mme. de Montespan arrived, honoring Yucca until supper was served in the big house.

I had one or two last minute telephone calls from town, urging me to join in whatever forlics were on the docket, but naturally I declined. Celeste had urged me to accompany her and I believe she was in town by 3:00 to be an early participant. It seems there were bands playing all afternoon on the margin of the river in front of the town, with the adjoining thoroughfares roped off to all traffic. The fireworks were at 7:15 and were finished before a 9 o'clock deluge set in. Eugene told me he took his father back to Cloutierville during the rain, and the stream of cars and buses on the Alexandria-Natchitoches highway was constant.

It is my understanding that the carnival folds up its traps and leaves from the Ardenbourg area on the morrow, and good riddance of bad rubbish. J. told me at dinner today that the sharpers had apparently done quite a brisk business on Saturday night and they fleeced some of the ladies to such a point that some of the latter threatened to telephone the Sheriff, and so some of the money was handed back.

Cane River took another victim on the Joyeous Coast last night, too, - some youth from Natchitoches, I believe. As I understand it a car in which four college youths were riding failed to make the abrupt turn on to the bridge at Bermuda, there almost in front of "Uncle Phanor's", and plunged into the water. Three youths extricated themselves but the fourth drowned. So many cars in a period of years go over that embankment, it seems odd nothing is done by way of concrete balustrades to discourage the plunges.

I cannot tell you how delighted I was on Saturday morning when asked by one of my secretaries if it were possible for me to write a letter on behalf of one of his friends, for it is always such a pleasure to assist in such matters. The paper was semi-legal in nature, and so I have no doubt the particulars dictated by the youth who had been presented to me were more or less factual.

I thought I had caught the name correctly when he was introduced, but I couldn't believe my ears, but confirmation came when the letter had to be typed.

I think you will be enormously impressed by the name, too, for it is so unexpected that few if any people, I think, would ever conjure up anything quite like it. And so here it is, --believe it or not, --Saint Elderberry. As for me, I give up right there.....

4550

Lucy Crockett
complet.
statement from Penland
11/28

Monday, December 4th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so, from the enclosure, you will note that your friend, little Miss Lucy, came across with a page for our impending opus.

I think it is alright, although if you feel on reading it that a phrase in the first sentence would clarify the thing, you will of course feel free to make such an addition. As I ran through the thing, - and I did so rather hurriedly, it seemed to me that some such phrase as "as far away from Melrose, Louisiana as Penland North Carolina" might add additional light, although it is quite possible that since the North Carolina address will be included at the beginning of the article, such a phrase as suggested is not at all required.

As between you and me, and nothing need be done about this, it seems to me that greater emphasis might have been given the Madam's actual contributions to Penland other than the sending of Egyptian cotton and wool. The way the sentence in the article is rigged up seems to indicate that somebody or other gave a memorail room and that the Madam gave the cotton and wool, whereas in reality I myself expressed (shipped by express, that is) one or two looms, a like number of lovely spool beds, a flock of books constituting a young library on weaving and so on, - chairs, rugs and the like. And the furnishing of such a room by one who never was interested in going to see the place I thought was quite interesting. I know not who may have given the money for the building of the structure in which the room figured, but it was my understanding that the entire of room, or at least the major portion of it, was, so far as furnishing were concerned, were shipped from here. Such a fact included in our Scrapbook would underline the Madam's charitable impulse, of course, but I don't care to discuss the matter with Lucy, and so I guess we should just let the article stand as it is.

In the mean time, I shall acknowledge receipt of her letter, and perhaps inquire about what type of bed or loom or whatever that the Madam provided for the establishment, and perhaps that will bring forth a response which, if it proves interesting, may be inserted in the body of the enclosed article. But let's not count of that.

4551

4551

The carnival pulled out from the honkey-tonk this morning and accordingly I spent some time looking after our interests at adjoining Arenbourg. Log passed this way just as I was leaving Yucca, and he accompanied me and lent me a hand. The sky was overcast and the wind chill, but we were sufficiently busy jumping about so we didn't mind the weather.

Two things the hill billies of the carnival left behind were a couple of negro boys. Where they had picked them up on their tour, and how they happened to leave them, I have no idea. I suppose the youths are perhaps 14 and 16 or thereabouts. My attention was directed toward them by Log who asked me to notice them in particular. As Log put it, "Me, I sure ain't no lily white nigger myself, but one of those little old boys is so balck that I'm bound to look like a fresh new snow flake along side him".

Around 4 o'clock, I encountered Celeste coming from the store as I was heading in that direction. She invited me to drive in to town at first dark, as she was taking Aurelia and "attie in to see the lights. Her thought was that I would enjoy the opportunity. My thought was that I don't want to start any such jaunts bent on sight-seeing, for the next thing would be somebody inviting her and me to a party or supper or some such, and I want nothing along that line. I declined, accordingly, and she seemed disappointed. She urged, but I, to avoid saying I just didn't want to (period), remarked that I had several things I felt bound to do. She countered that she, too, is mighty busy, -- to which, of course, there might have been several observations, including the business about the squirrel in his cage.

The plantation purchased pecanes for shipment to political and possibly personal friends, and although the supply ran out before the list did, it is quite possible you were in the early brackets and therefore may or may not receive some. In case you should, acknowledgement should go to J. A. and Celeste.

I read a little more from the Lucy Corckett book about Japan, -- "Popcorn on the Ginza" or some such title. I liked a couplet in the part about social readjustments in the island, American G. I.'s paying a 30 yen or a pack of cigarettes for the pleasure of spending a night with a Japanese girl in the old, old profession, etc., etc. According to Miss Corckett, the somewhat popular, bawdy words, learned by all "gay" girls of the island, and set to the tune of Clementine, runs something like this:

"Chocolato, chewing gumo, cigaretto, 30 yen;
All night sleepo, no presento; Ah regreto. -- Come again."

Don't you love that.....

4552

Tuesday, December 5th, 1950.

Memorandum: Thirty millin times wuld not suffice to tell you how happy your message of Friday, the 1st, reaching me today, made me and Arenbourg, whose birthday it is, thanks to you.

I think I mentioned in my yesterday's Memo that I had spent some time at Arenbourg yesterday and what with the birthday following so soon after, I envision more sweet olives and Chinese magnolias, don't you think so.

It has been misting all day, and the thermometer will tumble from 70 to 22 tonight, so that bright and early, -- and early, if not altogether bright, I shall be marching up the road again in the morning to dislodge any ice that may have formed on the leaves of any of our "children", and convey my plans to them for additional little playmates.

It is so kind of you to be so kind to us, and it is so much worth while, feeling that we are sharing so whole heartedly in the creation of our little Paradise.

I am glad the sections from the Time Table seemed alright, and as I ran through the transcripts, it sounded as though it was conveying the desired impression.

I am glad, too, that the Portraits in Color are shaping up, too. As for the Lyon New Orleans address, it seems to me he must have had at least three, -- one on Royal, one on Exchange Alley, and one on Canal, -- probably occupying each successively. Surely the Tinker information would be correct for one of these, and perhaps Mr. Landsford will come through with further particulars about the one he occupied with Canova. I had supposed I might have heard from Herr Landsford before now, but perhaps my request for additional information not only about Lyon of New Orleans but Lyons of Natchez, as well, may have impelled him to place the answer in a folder for subsequent answer when the desired particulars come to hand.

I'm glad you liked the Trichell item, and that you found it as much to your liking as I did to mine. Somehow I must confess that I never doubted you would, for instinctively I always feel our reactions are identical.

4553

4553

Wednesday, December 6th, 1950

Under separate cover I am sending some Iris publicity that Sister sent Celeste. I don't know if her name appears as author, but from the paragraph or two I heard, it is obviously from little Miss Dormon's facile pen. I thought it an excellent opportunity to write to congratulate her on her handiwork, not mentioning whence had come the publicity. It was the best form of a subtle taunt I could think of. But after writing the page, something unexpectedly transpired that made the whole business perfect. A "mouche d'automne" alighted on the page as I was just beginning the final paragraph, and picking up an envelope, I took a crack at the fly which escaped, but the swat tore the letter almost in two, - from the top to within an inch of the bottom, both pieces falling out of the machine and leaving only the paragraph at the end in the roller. And so I finished the sentence, folded up the two separate pieces, and posted them to Briarwood. I don't reckon the punch will be very effective, but the trouble little Miss Dormon may have in fitting the two pieces together will be enough to make her furious, which will be gratifying, so far as I am concerned.

Celeste and Adam Regard are fixing to take off for South Louisiana at tomorrow's dawning, for a two day folic. It's wonderful how the promise of a sleet storm during the night holds no terrors for them whenever the prospect of flying up and down the big road it to the fore.

Thus far I have been lucky in avoiding any wild duck suppers, which usually start turing up about this time of year. The season opened on Friday or Saturday and everybody seems to feel bound, to head out with a gun to knock down a few unsuspecting mallards or whatever the poor things are. The wild duck is much too gamey, I think, and on occasion when I have swallowed buck shot mixed in with the hip of a diminutive swan, my relish for the bird has not increased. "Little" Robert shot one before the season opened and has promised to bring me the band, which, according to report, bears a New York State address. If I can secure the band, I shall write the New York State bander, if such is the name, and shall perhaps learn something about duck migrations I didn't know before. I had always supposed that New York State wild ducks would follow along the Atlantic Coast when heading South instead of stepping over into the Mississippi watershed. I shall be surprised to learn if it turns out it is from Greenwood Lake, or some such. There were 5 or 6 on the water in front of Arengourg yesterday, and tomorrow I shall look for more when I go to celebrate yours and Arenbourg's and my birthday....

Handwritten note: 1/20 - 1/21 1951

4554 Carolyn Ramsey
Robina 17/10 1/13

Wednesday, December 6th, 1950.

Memorandum: I have been thinking of you for some time.

Here's a lot of tittle-tattle that is of no interest but which illustrates now neatly one can get into a false situation without any apparant means of guiding no account circumstances that jockey one into such a situation.

Dr. Rand dropped in unexpectedly at 4:30, bringing me several papers of interest he wanted to run through with me and a bottle of Taylor's port which I like but which he cannot imbibe because of his diabetis. Miss Tillinghast arrived at 4:32. I made the presentations and we chatted aimlessly for a few minutes when Dr. Rand, assuming I suppose that the lady was visiting me instead of using Yucca as a waiting room, invited the two of us to supper at the camp. Miss Tillinghast made some approving gesture but of course looked to me for a decision. I declined, lying by saying I was expecting people, but that I would make it a little later. Miss T. remarked that she would be glad to drive me over.

It seems that when the Bands had arrived, Dr. Rand had come here and Plythe had gone to the store where she was engaging J. H. in conversation. Dr. Rand finally withdrew about 5, and J. A. came to Yucca announcing supper, after which the lady would wait for him at Yucca. It was accordingly plum dark before I was rid of time-marauders, whereupon I galloped across the cotton patch in the direction of the Bands. I reached their side gate just as they swung their car around and headed toward home through their main gate.

I guess an apology is in order on my part for standing them up, and yet perhaps everybody was a little out of order, they for having arrived so late with their invitation, uninvited guests being too loath to linger and so on and so forth.

In fine this afternoon was a mess. I had fallen down while crossing the cotton patch and a mountainous furous, suddenly coming into contact with my chest just about knocked the stuffing out of me, and as I was cold to boot, - the thermometer never went about freezing today, I was glad to follow a trail toward Puny's lighted windows and sit for a while before his nice wood fire before heading back here. If this Memo seems unusually incoherent, just

4555

charge it off to the day's hurly-burly.

Under separate cover I am sending along some snapshots which came from Joe today. I was under the impression he had a picture of Lyle with a pet chicken sitting on his shoulder, but apparently Joe couldn't find it. The pictures of the Madam, - one on the big wagon and one by the buggy appear to be clear, although I leave it to you to decide if we can use any of them. It is Charles Mazurette with her. I took the pictures in 1940 or 1941.

The picture of Lyle by the side gate seems alright as a possible illustration, and of course the one with the goats has its touch of informality which makes it nice for a scrapbook illustration. I think the bag in the same picture must be Sister, and so thought Dr. Rand, but still we might use it, with a caption that mentions but Lyle by name. If you find the picture good for reproduction, -- we need but one of Lyle, I think, - you might select it instead of the slightly more conventional one standing by the gate.

I shall write Joe, thanking him for sending them, and telling him I shall return his prints sometime after the turn of the year, so you may not feel rushed about deciding on these items.

Today's post was rather heavy but I got an opportunity to read but a couple letters which are enclosed. Carolyn is guilty of raising a question without any hint of the answer, and so often in such instances, one tends to over estimate the answer in trying to figure out what the subject can be about. Her reference to a surprise in May is a case in point. If I am in any way concerned with what is pending, I hope she doesn't make the mistake of banking too heavily on what my reaction may be and thus find herself disappointed over some failure to realize something which taking me into account, at the same time has denied me an opportunity to dampen expectations as she mentally contrives whatever it is she is "studying up". I am glad to know I am not likely to be honored by a visit prior to January, save for a possible afternoon's call with the man from Maine. From now until after the holidays, I shall not be searching for visitors with eyes of yearning.

As regards the other enclosure, I think the writer, as often in the past, has struck a particularly fortunate comparison, and in the present instance I refer to the removal of the statue from the pedestal, a phrase which I suspect I shall feel impelled to borrow before the business is done.

And now I must call it a day, hoping the while that Manhattan is ever so much more Spring-like than us-es.....

Robina
Wac's
Library

4556 Rev. Giller

Thursday, December 7th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Sunday, the 3rd, letter in today's post, together with the Portraits in Color. And while mentioning the latter, I must remark how grand it looks so nicely typed, and somehow it seems rather longer than I had anticipated.

It was so kind of you to write me, even though your week end was not too convenient for effecting such contacts. Perhaps the impending one may be more favorable, although I suspect with all the hurly-burly of pre-holiday doings, your time may scarcely be called your own from now until '51 gets well under way.

As Time goes along, the more I incline to feel that the ideal Christmas might be found somewhere or other, in a place one might limit one's self to seeing just the persons one really cherishes. I suppose that is what the Madam really had in mind when she used to propose she and I go to spend the holidays at Charlie Taylor's. Perhaps I have mentioned Charlie Taylor's house before, but I shall repeat myself, because you have subsequently gone over the McInness pictorial map, and to this day Charlie Taylor's house still stands atop the Indian Mound back on a remote stretch of Little River not too far from St. Marys-on-the-Bayou.

I can imagine how impatient you were to have the pictures and captions over the week end, but under the circumstances, since you wouldn't have had much opportunity to spend much time with them, perhaps you got a break early in the week when they actually did come to hand.

I feel sure you have found the Father and Son photograph an excellent likeness. I am under the impression it must have been photographed at some time when the glass was removed, it seems so remarkably clear. Sometime, after the holidays, if we could have some little ones made, I should be delighted. I don't know by whom this particular photograph was "struck", but I rather assume it may have been taken in New Orleans prior to its advent into this section.

As always when the mail arrived I set your envelope aside for my most confidential secretary, but turned loose the rest

3224

4557

on poor Dr. Knipmeyer, and a flock of stuff it was, none of it of much interest save, perhaps, the Harness letter, covering his Alaskan trip. I shall send it along under separate cover, but I feel impelled to ask you quite frankly if I would do better to avoid sending you quite so much correspondence for the time being, at least. Naturally I love to share anything that has even the scantest interest if you enjoy keeping up with the trends, but if at certain seasons the pressure of your own correspondence plus the multitudinous other demands on your time make these a bit unweildy, I hope you will signify such pressure, and I shall understand perfectly and side track them to the trash basket. Please feel quite frank about expressing yourself on this point, and I shall gladly be guided accordingly.

Yesterday's cold wave continued today, with the thermometer touching 14 last night and not getting much above freezing all day. There is cloud coverage tonight, however, and 20 will be the low tonight, it is said, and then tomorrow it may start rising, - I hope. It has been snowing in various places, and if it will only keep on snowing any place but here, I shall be enchanted, for while I vastly enjoy Bing Crosby, I am not as one with him as he begins about this time of year "dreaming of a white Christmas". By the way, I saw the picture that song appeared in, - but years ago in Matchez, and I thought it was among the "worse" pictures I ever saw. How the song ever survived such a beginning is a mystery.

Pf. opirise was emcjamted tp :earn tjt upi stib;ed rber tje :oamp quartet on Sunday afternoon, just as I had done the same thing later the same day. I am glad you mentioned the Manhattan hour in the afternoon, for I shall sample my air waves at that hour, although I reckon National stations within my reach go early in the afternoon out of "anyattan may be too elusive. ut by 8:30 p.m., if the weather is not too stormy, I can reach out and grab off Des Moines without any difficulty, and so if I do not seem to be precisely in step with you around 8:30, there is little doubt that I will be in stride alright at least 5 hours later.

On Monday night I stumbled on to the very end of the Dupont program, - I believe it was Monday night, and I regretted I had missed everything, for from the final sentence, I gathered it was devoted to Major Lenfant about whom I know too little and should have enjoyed hearing what the Wilmington Department had to offer on the subject. If somebody would only do "the life and times of Pierre Lenfant" or whatever his name was, wouldn't that be wonderful

Mrs. Holoman writes to ask whom she may contact in Natheez on December 23rd for information regarding the Priest's House. Can you imagine contacting anybody for anything on Saturday, December 23rd..... (Smile)

4558

King Solomon

Wm. Brown Holomey
app. 17/17

Friday, December 8th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your Monday and Wednesday letters in today's post, together with the Time Table transcript.

I am glad you enjoyed turning through some of the pictures and I hope the captions, - the part I did, - turned out alright, and I apologize for having rigged them up so that they require extra labor for your own true hand in filling in some of the quotations. If any or all of them seem too wooden, do please send them back and I shall be glad to have another "go" at them, for some of them were contrived under adverse circumstances and might well have made me blush, should I have run through them when finished.

It seems so odd about the "children of Strangers" article, but I shall continue my search for my second copy. And in the mean time, if you care to include the copy you have in the manuscript to be submitted to "r. Atham, that will be alright, for it is being submitted, of course, with the understanding that it is subject to additions and corrections. As I recall, the only changes I made were on pages 4 and 5, -- if memroy serves, and it may not in this instance, - at the point where formerly I had supposed Grandpere built Yucca and the African House, where in reality I should have ascribed them to "arie Therese. I feel certain I shall run up on this elusive item shortly, and shall naturally send it along in a jiffy, but in the mean time, the article as is might go along as a sample of the article which is subject to eventual alteration on one or two pages.

The enclosure from Bill "aloney gives the green light to the Rose Franken correspondence. Now if little Miss Theata or however will just take pen in hand, all should go swimmingly in the correspondence department. As for getting Caroline's O. Kay, I propose to leave that just as long as possible, and it would seem to me I might perhaps guarantee no argument with her on the point by merely saying that unless I hear from her to the contrary, I shall put the thing through. That might impell her to write, but I doubt if even that will, and so we shall proceed on the assumption that "silence does indeed give approval".

4559

Imagine my surprise this afternoon when I found myself in town. The proofs taken from the air had never come to hand and it struck me I had better pass by the photographers to see if they had ever been forwarded. They had not. I squinted at the negatives and was vastly disappointed because the 14 shots taken were just about the coverage that Nina had included in her pictorial map and not a concentration on the gardens, as I had requested. But re-takes are impossible at the present time, and so I shall have an over-all picture printed and perhaps at some other time I shall be able to get a limited likeness of just the gardens.

All in all, ten minutes must have elapsed between the time I struck the limits of the city and the moment I was beyond its confines again which was plenty long for me. But although the air remains cold, the sky was cloudless with a chance of warmer weather on the morrow. It will be nice if it does warm up a little for I have a flock of people coming Saturday afternoon, the Mayor of Lafayette and a party, and some others from Baton Rouge or some such place and the latter group will include Governor Long's sister-in-law or some such bag. Surely she can't be more baggish than Earle's sister which is something to be thankful for.

I saw Mrs. Obombs for a few minutes this noon. She says there is much activity in the legal department of the Welfare Department, but she doesn't quite see how some of the attempted re-adjustments in handling the need are going to pan out. A case in point, for example, is that of Clyde Claude Emmett Davis. He is the father of Jackie, Clemence's daughter. He left her for another lady living on Little River a year or so ago. The 4 children by Jackie have been drawing relief checks but now those check have been stopped and Clyde Claude Emmett Davis has been called upon by the Court to support the same. But that, of course, leaves the new wife and children, - two and a half offspring, to be assisted financially, and while two and a half would require less money than 4, still it would seem odd for a man's wife and children to be on relief while he is shelling out money to support those other offspring begotten by an earlier liason. Its all very confusing and obviously the wisdom of another Solomon is required, -- or birth control, - or sterilization or Heaven, --not I, - alone knows.

I'm so glad you heard the Lemfant business. I remember so well the modest flat slab of his white marble tombstone lying flat in the grass immediately in front of the Lee mansion at Arlington.....

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Caroline Dornon 176
Helen Baldwin 176

Sunday, December 10th, 1950.

Memorandum:

First off, a couple of references to material for the Scrapbook, - or perhaps, more precisely, a couple of things about the Scrapbook.

Either herewith or under accompanying envelope are a couple of communications of equal interest. The letter from Helen, always interesting, bears on the Scrapbook pertinently where it touches upon her conversation with the Dallas bag who certainly hasn't written anything about Macmillan being not the proper house for our budding manuscript. You, of course, have had whatever has come to hand from Dallas, and, if memory serves, there hasn't been a letter from that direction in several months, and I certainly recall nothing by way of discouragement in any of those as regards Herr Latham and his emporium, - in fact, if memory serves, it was old Dallas herself that recommended Latham to our attention. Well, anyway, you will note what Helen has to say about the lady, and we shall eventually see what we shall see from lower Fifth Avenue, and at the same time we shall feel just as happy that we did not confine our aspirations exclusively in that direction.

And the second matter dealing with the Scrapbook is the advent of little Miss Dornon's contribution, - albeit at long last. But it appears to have been worth waiting for, for generally speaking, it seems to be an excellent likeness of planting at Melrose, unrolled on a film heavily trade marked by the Dornon seal.

I have run through the article but once, and then ever so hurriedly, but right up to the last page it sounded good. I was somewhat knocked off center when I unexpectedly stumbled over myself. Automatically my first impulse, naturally, was to eliminate the sentence, but my reader casually observed that under the peculiar circumstances, it might be better to let it stand.

I think Caroline must have worked mighty hard on that paragraph, and I must say I was pleased at her forethought or was it absence of thought, that she spoke of the sons but skipped mention of the daughter. Instead of having me treading paths all over the place, we may substitute some line such as "continues to nurture (or foster,) the aspirations so lavishly implanted at Melrose by Miss Cammie's loving care". In the mean time, feel free to eliminate me completely, or let the thing go, or substitute changes as seems best to you, and things can be adjusted later if desired.

4561

Tow other points, that just occur to me. If Dr. Small is not identified, - and vaguely it seems to me he was not, perhaps a phrase should be added, - something like "Director of the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens", immediately after his name. I shall probably have no one to check on this before I send the manuscript on the morrow, and so if you will advise me on this point, I shall ask Caroline his precise title.

And finally, we might suppress the word "cabin" in the paragraph wherein I figure. "Cabin" like "lake" seems to add to confusion in these parts and for that reason it seems well to never use those two words. For example, and I may have mentioned this before, people occasionally say something like this to me: -

"We have always been told that there is no place for fishing like Cane River Lake but we can't believe it, for we have had wonderful luck in the river, but some of our friends want me to inquire the way to the lake so they can say they have really fished in it."

And ever so often I have pointed out the various buildings here and after the tour has been completed, someone will say, pointing to the Studio, that it must be the cabin where Lyle Saxon did his writing. When I wave them back to Yucca, they never seem quite convinced about it, seeming to believe that he actually lived at Yucca but since it is the size it is, it must have been in a smaller place where he did his actual writing, since he refers to his "workshop" as a cabin. Perhaps for "cabin", we might substitute the word "Yucca" or "Melrose", or perhaps leave out the phrase completely. Your own good judgement in this matter will be perfect.

Well, Lord, what a lot of talk

And speaking of the Lord recalls that I dipped into T. V. Smith's "Philosophic Life in America" last night and was much interested in some of the chapters, especially the one devoted to Dr. Montague whom I used to know pretty well. The account of Santyana's concept of life was arresting, too. In speaking of his doubt as to the existence of God and yet his inclination to cherish certain religious trends, a wag is quoted as having said of Santyanna:

"That philosopher doesn't believe in the existence of God and swears that Mary was His mother."

But what with the enclosures and the accompanying Briarwood manuscript, both of which are interesting, I will do better to break off slap.....

4562 King Solomon
17/6

Monday, December 11th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so I chanced to be at the Post Office this morning when the Postman arrived, bringing me, curiously enough, not a 1st, 2nd or 3rd class piece, which means tomorrow's batch will be a bumper crop, I suppose.

But he brought Celeste a letter from Sister, saying that she and Gene and the children were having Sunday (Dec. 24th) dinner with Gene's parents and "we would love to come to Melrose for Christmas and the children wouldn't mind sleeping in Mother's room".

From that, I take it, a patch-up must be in the offing.

I assume the "we" means the five of them, but that is merely an assumption, although there was reference to several gifts from husband to wife and splendid advice given the husband by the Shriners, the latter being some Sliety Gene has but recently joined.

I can't believe Shriners would mess into a man's domestic affairs to start with, but since Dr. Yaeger and one or two Natchitoches physicians have recently received draft summonses, I can imagine that old Uncle Samuel might be shuffling up the cards of physicians who didn't participate in the last scuffle, and for all I know, one doctor who escaped that go round may have in mind that a wife and three children might offer some kind of a nice bulwark. But that, of course, is sheer speculation on my part.

And so things swirl toward the holiday season and if five Wenks suddenly catapult themselves into the Melrose brew along about Christmas Eve, the stew really ought to reach the bubbling over stage.

What curious patterns those people can stir up for themselves.

But I might do better to mind my own business and attend to problems falling quite outside the Henry category, and one of these is the fact that I am bound to give thought to some new posts and a portion of fence at Arenbourg. This morning I found a cow grazing on the terrace. I am glad to say she had

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4563

Monday, December 13th, 1950.

paid no attention to the Fortuonis, but I don't like to leave such luck to repeat itself too often. The big wind of last Spring, in knocking down some of the black locusts, tossed them slap across the fence which did it no good, and what with time and ~~the~~ attendant circumstances, our little province really requires some repairs to its defenses.

J. H. returns from Dallas on the morrow and I shall ask him to negotiate for some creosote posts which he can order in quantity for the plantation, including some for our territory. These will come by Christmas, I suppose, and during the seasonal lull before ploughing starts, Arenbourg can get its new frontiers in order and all will be in order whenever Spring makes its bow.

I called on Adam Regard just after supper. She is staying flat on her back for a day or two, - lumbago. She said the Lady Doctor came to see her this noon and she found her looking so well, even though her life continues strenuous enough, I gather. Miss Sally, back from the Alexandria hospital, entertained the Worsleys yesterday and then telephoned the Lady Doctor between 5 and 6 this morning to come to give her a bit of attention. Miss Sally is senile, but attention she must have. And so the Lady Doctor had breakfast at Magnolia, flew up and down the road on other calls, dined at Melrose and was supposed to have another patient on the Joyeous Coast that would require her presence there at supper time. How she continues to look well under such a regime, I cannot imagine, but perhaps it is the variety of places she breaks bread at, as between jumps. Madam Regard said she seemed to enjoy just relaxing during the little visit she made on her, and I hope she didn't try to find me at Yucca, as I was at Arenbourg at the time.

A telephone from Alexandria this morning afforded me an opportunity to talk with Herr und Frau Rand. The former kidded me about failing to put in an appearance for supper the other night, assuming, naturally, that the Tillinghast number was my guest. Imagine. Blythe was happy on two counts, for her Mother had been well enough to get out for a ride yesterday, and secondly, because Paul King Rand flies down from Hartford this week end. I suppose Paul King will come up to see me on Saturday or Sunday. I like him but he is cursed with the family falling, - writer's cramp, - and so I never hear from him between his semi-annual visits, although I occasionally drop him a note regardless.

The weather remains chill, but the promise for balmy breezes for (from) the Gulf tomorrow impells me to be-stir myself early in the morning with a view to setting out some switch cane at Yucca which affords me an excellent excuse for folding up my beard forth with just to anticipate the dawn.....

2262

4564 Melrose picture frontier air
Te Ata 12/7/50

Tuesday, December 12th, 1950.

Memorandum: Here I find myself at the close of this Tuesday feeling as though last Sunday and Monday were weeks back. I have sometimes wondered what conjures up such a sensation for it doesn't necessarily seem based on fatigue following unusual exertion, although it is possible some unconscious increase in mental activity is what seems to have spun the world faster at some moment when we weren't watching.

Well, anyway, it has been pleasant enough and active enough today and the mail, as anticipated, was fairly heavy but nothing of unusual interest, except the nice letter from the Princess Te Ata which you may have already discovered enclosed.

Her inclination to use the double dating system is rather a pleasant whimsey, I think, and her habit of tossing in an occasional Indian expression, literally translated into English tends to be arresting, and somehow a little suggestive of that Briarwood gal whom I have always expected to tear off a piece of white birch bark and skribble an epistle in charcoal.

Caroline doesn't know Te Ata but I guess I had better get the two acquainted for it would seem they could rattle off a primordial lingo that would enchant each other no end.

I saw Celeste momentarily today and in line with nothing at all, she casually said:

"Oh, did you know that Mrs. Wagner's mother died several weeks ago."

Well, that was news, and before folding up my beard tonight, I had better take Underwood in hand to pen a few lines to Iola, Kansas, don't you think so.

It has always been my understanding that Mrs. Wagner lingered on in Kansas merely because of her Mother's advanced age, and so now that she has gone, perhaps the lady will dispose of her property there and pack up her traps for the country of the Hatchitoes where she also has a home. And, perhaps, after all the excitement is over, she will pen us a couple of volumes about Scrapbooks. Anyway, a letter seems in order so far as I am concerned.

4565

In today's post came an article for the Negro Digest which Mrs. Holoman and I had worked on a while back. I detected the fine legal hand of her husband on or rather throughout the first two or three pages, which would delight a Blackstone, perhaps, but would not particularly fascinate a black reader of the Digest. Then, too, she had slapped in some stuff that I had dictated to her for another article, quite separate from the over-all Melrose thing, which would have taken the fundamentals out of the second said article, which would be a form of slaughter that would be quite senseless.

Then, too, there were other far-afiel material that had no place in the business anyhow, and

I started to write lastly, but on second thought shall qualify by saying another thing, - she twice used a new phrase in referring to the mulattoes which she must have picked up in some Kane opus or whoever is constantly tossing in some French words to what point I know not. Her marvelous contribution was "creoles de couleur", which certainly ought to make the Madam turn in her grave, for the Madam didn't mind saying she was a creole, and I think old Webster defines the same as the descendant, born in America, of European ancestry of the Caucasian race. In short, little Mrs. Holoman must not use the words "creoles de couleur" but if she must go to French for a gasp or two, I shall not object if she employs something like "blancs de couleur". Don't you think so.

In her accompanying note, she said she was holding the article until receiving my approval. I shall write her tonight that she doesn't even have my disapproval and that under no circumstances can the thing be forwarded until we have had a re-hash of the business, and that I suggest she shelve the whole business until about February.

Under separate cover in this morning's mail, I forwarded the picture of Clemence for which you asked, - it was one taken by Helen Baldwin originally, and with the same, of the view of Melrose from the air was included.

I shall be glad to have your opinion of the latter. Some sort of a caption was attached, if case you find it of sufficient interest to include in the Scrapbook. If not, just keep the picture for yourself. I couldn't detach the white handkerchief I had tossed out on the morning the plane was around, but with his bright eyes, Peter says he can see me in front of the banana plants at Yucca where I was working that morning. But please don't try to write really until all the current hurly-burly of the impending holidays are behind. Your own conservation of self is the most important thing of all...

4566

Mrs. Holoman 17/12/50
Harry Smith 17/12

Wednesd y, December 13th, 1950.

How nice to find your elegant letter with enclosures in today's post.

I am indebted to you for bringing up the several points regarding the Old Plantation Scrapbook, and for sending along the two captions, so much approximating each other, covering the 1st and 2nd St. Augustin's Church. I have stickin out all save the opening sentence of the one caption, -- covering the present Church, substituting another slant, typed on the page you sent, and it seems to me this may cover the illustration very nicely and at the same time pack in a few thoughts that will breathe interest and perhaps excitement to the reader.

As indicated on the same sheet, perhaps both of these illustrations may be used in the chapter on Cane River Children of Strangers. I had envisioned doing a chapter on Melrose Religion into which I thought these and the pictures of St. Mary's might be incorporated, but circumstances have been such that tossing off such a chapter has seemed difficult to the point of impossibility what with other distractions. Accordingly let us tentatively use them in connection with the Cane River Children of Strangers thing, - the St. Mary's in contrast to the St. Augustin's, with the hope that later we may lift them from that position if I have success in hammering out the Religion thing.

In response to another question, - the final use of the obituary, I leave it to your judgement, both as to form and position in the volume. I had thought of it as being in the front, but as the thing falls into final form, perhaps it would be equally striking at the end. This, I suppose, depends much upon what I am trying to do in regard to a chapter on the Madam and Melrose which I have undertaken a billion times, only to go haywire on two or three different tacks, not the least of which was the constant wonder in my own mind as to what would be covered by people like the Trichell, Dormon outfit. Now that these things are come to hand, perhaps I shall feel the chapter in question will be easier to knock off, and if so, -- and this answers your

other question, --the chapter will provide a place for the Kinsey-Williams opinions.

The secretarial problems being what they are, I have been most dissatisfied with my recent endeavors, and the more striking is this condition as one approaches the holiday season when "all God's chil'en" incline to flounder about more unpredictably. I guess this is another reason why the Madam used to be glad when December was done, for not only in the secretarial field but in domestic and plantation operations as well, the unpredictable is a major consideration, but the domestic and plantation spheres have always had the advantage of being possessed of a vast surplus of potential workers which, as you know, is not the case in the secretarial field. But ahead I shall charge and eventually something will issue forth from the mill.

There was a telephone for Celeste from Shreveport last night. Sister called to say that her husband had moved back home, and that they will all be enchanted to spend Christmas at Melrose. What a spectacle to contemplate and how peaceful should seem the aftermath, assuming there is anything left when said aftermath arrives. But the presence of such a mob of unsympathetic souls should provide me with rather more peace than otherwise, what with everyone having so much material to work on by ways of getting into each other's perruques. Humiliation, I suppose, takes into account that somebody or other must be off on the wrong foot, and since everybody concerned apparently feels that he or she is never the one out of step, no such sensation can develop. Each will denounce and complain about the other to me and I shall sit tight on the sidelines and listen to both the moans and the roars, trying to tell myself there was never was such a cockeyed set up but trying to kid myself into believing that in reality it is the most natural and matter of fact sort of thing transpiring in every family.

And all of this, of course, calls to mind that hilarious line in one of Oscar Wilde's plays wherein he speaks of some lady's gown which gave the impression it was conceived in a fury and put on in a tempest, or some such.

But there are the nicer prospects to contemplate and the hurly-burly will be met and contended with as they arise, and a couple of weeks hence we shall glance back and wonder why we made such a racket about them. And besides there is always the Romeo Overture at the close of two day and the promise of felicity that comes with losing one's self in it and the happy thoughts of things fundamental and those, -- or one -- who really matters.....

Thursday, December 14th, 1950.

Memorandum:

I attach King Rand's page from the Guest Book. ✓

And, aside from that, there is nothing of interest to report, so if you skip the balance of this letter and thus save a segment of energy at a time when life must be terribly rushed, you will have missed nothing at all.

As I wrote the date line, the thought came to me that for some time I had been intending to mention a matter about determining dates that I find ever so useful.

Twice before during the present month, I have started to mention it, and then it suddenly seemed so trite that I skipped it, for I have no doubt you have employed the system all your life which my dull brain has but lately evolved for my convenience. But because you are always so charitable with my repetitions, I am going to mention the system regardless.

I guess I always knew that any multiple of 7 during the 30 odd days of the month invariably fall on the same day of the week, as for example, this present December when Knipmeyer Day is bound to be the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th. That certainly can't be news to anyone, and yet, for myself, I never before considered the matter at all. The result has always been that if somebody said something about an appointment on the 15th or the 29th or when ever, my mind never automatically unrolled the four 7's of the month automatically so that I might readily establish which day of the week the date would fall. But now, and henceforth, whenever a new month starts, I shall note on which day the 7th appears, and so will easily determine any dates in between in establishing which day of the week they will appear, for, example, as in January, 1951, the 7th will be on Sunday and all the following multiples of 7 will fall slap on Sunday, too, so that when someone telephones from town to ask for an appointment as, say on the 13th or the 22nd, I shall instantly realize they are talking about a Saturday or a Monday without any floundering around for a calendar, as in the past.

Frankly, did you ever hear so much talk about anything so kindergarten-ish.

1288

4569

When I went out the front gate around 6:30 this morning, I was impressed by the spectacle of 30 or 30 negroes scuffling about a tractor in front of the old store and what is the gray of the morn, - for it was cloudy, I couldn't make out what all the excitement was about. But it turned out the tractor was on fire, and every few seconds a huge sheet of flame would flare up. The negroes were scooping up water from a mud puddle and generally carrying on, until finally they hitched a bull dozer on to the thing and dragged the flaming monster down to the brink of the river. J. H. and Eugene seemed to be somewhere in the milling crowd, and so I just kept on going toward the store where I remained until three quarters of an hour later when the fire had finally been extinguished. Why nobody thought of the simple expedient of merely pouring water into the gas tank instead of sprinkling the outside of the contraption, I wouldn't know, and didn't inquire, for I never make any observations whatsoever on matter concerning strictly plantation doings.

Mr. Brew had been filling up the tractor while the engine was still running, and I suspect he had let the thing run over. His face was scorched a little, but otherwise he wasn't effected, and since the doings provided vast entertainment for the others fighting the flames, I guess everybody was pleased with the doings and later Napoleon Bonaparte Carter examined the thing and found that in spite of all the flares, little damage had actually been done.

On the 1st of the year we are to have another, - additional voerseer, filling out the role in labor at least, that was once assigned to Teddy Baranouski. The new man's name is McKinney, is an L. S. U. graduate of the Agricultural School, I believe, and hails from some such place as North Louisiana or Fort Worth or some such.

On the social side, a letter came for J. H. and Celeste from their physician brother-in-law, contemplating the impending joys at being with the family at Melrose on Christmas. From here on out, he's a lost soul, so near as I can figure it out, and he must be a fool to boot, but nevertheless I am glad he is, for it certainly relieves pressure from the Wenk section to know that business has been patched up.

It is rumored the S. G. Henrys may remain in Baton Rouge as the Junior S. G.'s may get away from where ever they are in Kentucky to spend the holidays with Papa and Mama, which means, I assume, they may all four make a round up here between Christmas and New Years.

So the holiday picture approaches a focus, and so I prove my earlier statement that there was nothing to gain in

1289

4570

Friday, December 15th, 1950.

Memorandum: Mya I tell you that an elegant great big old package awaited me at the Post Office this morning together with an equally elegant fat envelope.

And may I tell you further that the elegant big old package in the corner at the end of my armoire where I can glance at it from this vantage point as I am doing slap now, while nestling safely within the armoire is the equally elegant fat envelope, awaiting the eventual pleasure of opening date which, for the latter, will be on the morrow, along about noon, it being Saturday, and for the package, along about first dark when it will be the hour when I am invariably alone.

For while both secretaries arrived at the same time last night, both of them failed to show up at all tonight, and so I practice patience, drum up excuses of inclemency of the weather and health, and, on the side, even though Grandpa may not be listening, blow off a bit of steam at the trifling ways of my secretariat.

In view of the snarl into which postal deliveries have been effected by the current wild cat railroad strike, I guess we both did well this year to get parcel post business taken care of well in advance of the holiday peak. As for myself, I felt I was rushing the season a little when I forwarded my package to you, but now I find myself ever so glad that the matter was achieved when it was.

Some of the larger school children hailed me this morning as I was marching to Arenbourg. They were quite a piece behind me when I heard them calling. They wanted to tell me that yesterday in their school, - St. Mathew's, their teacher had taken time out to read them the story of The Black Swan from The Negro Digest. They asked if it was a really true story and if, as the teacher had said, a picture of the lady hung at Yucca, and somehow seemed a little surprised when I assured them that it was verily so.

There were four in the group and I told them when they came back from school this afternoon, I would be at home and they might drop in to see the picture if they cared to. They beamed and flew on up the road.

about 4 o'clock

4571

About 4 o'clock this afternoon, their number swelling from 4 to 12, they tapped on my portal. I suppose they were about fourteen years old but seemed rather older, what with the youths wearing long trousers and the girls obviously done up for a special occasion, which led me to believe they must have gone home before coming this way. And so they had a good look at The Black Swan and some of the other objects about the place which seemed to interest them, after which, the weather being humid but mild, we sat on the back gallery long enough to have a coke together and to finish off some cookies la Knipmeyer had brought me yesterday.

It was all very pleasant and when they departed, I sent a little note along to their teacher, inviting the teaching staff from the school to pass this way during the holidays, when, you may be sure, they will all appear in their best "bibb and tucker" and I shall listen with interest to what they have to say about one or two educational points I shall bring up for discussion after we have made a little tour and sipped a little glass of wine.

I heard Mr. Dewey's speech last night and was quite surprised at his delivery which seemed so much more vigorous and inspiring than his Presidential campaign orations. Among other things, I gather he painted the picture with unusually dark colors or else I have not yet grasped the impending peril which he pictured with such force. I couldn't help smiling to myself as he committed the blunder of underlining the fact that while greater taxes must be imposed, they must not be levied on the excess profits lists. Frankly I haven't the vaguest means of determining if those 50 million dollar melons the U. S. Steel Company have been cutting are already over taxed or not, but I suspect U. S. Steel hasn't yet reached the point where it is necessary to start jingling a tin cup. But whether that be the case or not, it seemed to me Mr. Dewey again demonstrated what the members of his Party are always stupidly setting forth, - the rigors of great fortunes and while little incomes must bear greater and greater burdens in taxes, we mustn't so much as glance in the direction of the "big boys".

At this moment there is a Christmas tree trimming party going on next door. I was invited of course and of course declined. I also took the opportunity to decline another invitation that I knew would be forthcoming on the 27th, - which, according to my formula, would be on a Wednesday, when the gentry of the "lower coast" will assemble for egg nog and a heap of no account chatter. Like early deliveries of Christmas packages this year, it is pleasant to realize a negative response to such parties is transmitted well in advance of the magical hour for assembling.....

4572

*Xmas packages
weaving insert*

*Rfd. dupl. of "Cane
Rover's Children
of Strangers"*

Saturday, December 16th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so the Italian Doge, prevented by law from ever leaving his city, was asked, after his tour of Versailles, where he had been brought by the order of Louis XIV, was asked what miracle had impressed him most in the palace and gardens, to which he blandly replied:

"Finding myself here."

And the same goes for me under such an unexpected date line.

But I have had such a splendid late afternoon and early evening, I feel impelled to break custom and give up my role as The Saturday Night Trappist.

For this afternoon I had the triple pleasure of reading your two last letters and, after doing a modest bit of decorating for the holiday season, I opened the big box and distributed all the pretty packages about, compromising with curiosity in but two instances, - the little boxes, so light in weight and so intriguingly wrapped in white tissue paper and tied with silver cord. Somehow there was something about them that reminded me of the gay silvered cones that have continued throughout the year to grace my desk lamp, and I had a feeling there some something akin inside.

And so you may picture the setting, for I explored the contents of each box, and the carillon entranced me to the point I had to do something about them forthwith.

And so I banked the big old fireplace in my living room with branches of magnolia leaves, twice as shiny the surface of their waxy dark green leaves with the black soot of the back of the fireplace. And with such a back-drop I suspended the lovely collection of silvery bells, swinging from their scarlet ribbons, from the iron "L" and "S" atop the guardian andirons.

The effect is marvelous, and I need scarcely recall the setting to which these gay numbers give such a marvelous note, - the great mirror above, with the fireplace below, its white bricks outlining the cavern below, black in the farthest recesses, the explosion of green magnolia leaves, the sturdy andirons, set off with their respective carillons. The bookshelf filling in the balance of that end of the room seem to lend just the

4573

proper subdued color note so as almost to echo the gleaming silver and scarlet dominating the entire color scheme, with the gay blues and whites and red striped packages grouped on each side of them on the brick floor of the fireplace itself.

I cannot tell you how entranced I am at the whole business and how happy my entire holiday is going to be, thanks to your delicious gifts. I seem a little puzzled that I seem to have the fortitude to leave the other packages unopened, but I attribute this to the fact that because the decorations you provided are so complete in making a joyous setting, I seem to find contentment and complete satisfaction just in contemplating the whole scene as it is, knowing full well that if I ever started prying into the other beautifully wrapped packages before Christmas Eve, I should never be able to get them back into the lovely shapes they now present and make glad my heart every time I glance in their direction.

As for your letters, I concur with everything you say, and subscribe but completely with everything you suggest regarding the layout.

I attach the requested continuity for the two articles on Weaving and hope it is about as required, although I hope you will make any additions or subtractions or alterations that seem pertinent. I think I mentioned I wrote Lucy Morgan requesting some particulars about the loom, assuming she might respond by mentioning not only this one and others, but also some of the other items sent from Melrose to furnish the Cammie G. Henry Room, including beds, books, chairs, etc. Possibly we shall receive a letter covering these, and if so, I think we may lift out the sentences or paragraphs and insert them where ever you think proper in the original article we are reproducing.

Under separate cover, I am also sending back the copy of the Cane River's Children of Strangers article you so thoughtfully enclosed in your letter. I have corrected it so that I believe it is up to publication standard now. Beginning on page 4, I have written a paragraph that will replace the one on that page, - the name Augustin being replaced by that of Marie Therese, and together with a few other words written in between the lines on the balance of the page and the succeeding one, together with a phrase added on the next to the last page to bring the local sugar production into line with the present, I believe the thing can be used. It goes without saying that together, you and I could do a much better job, but I think that with the few corrections added today, the thing will pass.

I agree with you that this article should fall into the latter part of the book, perhaps immediately after the Melrose, the Madam and outbuildings and all, and just at the beginning of Yucca. The portraits should be in the Yucca section, too, of course. It has been such a happy day, thanks exclusively to you. and now I must go and contemplate my carillons some more.....

4574

*St. Augustine's school
on Little River
burned down.*

Sunday, December 17th, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so I shall make three strikes on the envelope containing this Memo, and you will be muttering in your beard:

"There ought to be a Law....."

But it's a lovely Sunday night, with a nice fat moon, and although I haven't anything in particular to say, I cannot resist the impulse to chat a little, according to Sunday night custom.

My day was consumed with a flock of callers, half a dozen negroes at random hours, a flock of half grown black hogs sampling all the bulbs in the gardens, a dribbling of pilgrims and Blythe, Paul King down from Hartford and Blythe's sister, Willie Wynn White. Dr. Rand is in Turo Hospital, New Orleans, for a check up, and so he couldn't be here today.

The Rands were entranced with the appearance of my festive fireplace and the carillons were new to them, and they were delighted with them. They brought packages wrapped in red Christmas paper, which make a very nice addition to those already clustered about the fireplace, - and I think you would like it, too.

I dined across the fence, and we were nine at the board, - five of Celeste's kin folks from South Louisiana, pleasant enough and dull as could be.

Of local news, there doesn't seem much, although I think I did not mention in my Saturday Memo that on Friday night or Saturday morning at 2 a.m. St. Augustine's school on Little River burned down. From here on out for the balance of the school year, St. Augustine's Church will be pressed into service as an educational make-shift.

I must refer to your recent letter making acknowledgement of the snapshots Joe Henry sent. You ask if anyone ever remarked there was something about Lyle's appearance that resembled my own. It is curious you should have noticed it, for while no white person has ever referred to the coincidence, several of the old negroes have, and for a while I used to suspect good old Zaline wasn't sure always if it was to Lyle or me she was chatting. Resourceful woman that she was,

4575

4575

she finally simplified the matter by calling both of us "Papa", although it always seemed to me Lyle's unusual height, - I guess he must have been 6 feet 3 or 4 inches, should have made identification easy for her.

And may I congratulate you on the brightness of your eyes in detecting the tell-tale belt log was wearing. In reality it was mine at one time, and he loved it as much as I was indifferent about it. Mr. "harness made one for me which I kept for sentimental reasons but those people in Austin whose name eludes me at the moment, presented me with one that was almost a duplicate, with much silver buckle, hand wrought and all the other trappings, much too flamboyant for my conservative inclinations. And so I was entranced when the Dark Duke viewed it with eyes of yearning. I did not know that he was still wearing it at the time the photo was "struck", for that must have been months if not a year since he had acquired it.

It goes without saying that I hope the ensuing week will not be too much of a bang-up on your time and energies. I even go so far as to hope you may get a few moments of relaxation or, if not that, at least a few moments just for yourself, although I suppose that is in the class of miracles.

I don't know how things will shape up here, but I intend grabbing off a little time to myself, - on Christmas Eve if none other time. The Kleisers, or how ever they spell their name, are to spend Tuesday here. He is doing some painting in town, and one or two people have come up from New Orleans for portraits. But he wants to take one day out to absorb this bend of the river, and as both he and his wife are charming people, it will be pleasant to have them.

I shall have little time for reading, I reckon, for what I want to do on Arenbourg and the Underwood will make my eye lids heavy when night closes down. Besides, I am in the literary doldrums at the moment, with nothing save "Richard Carvell" by the American Winston Churchill to read at the moment, although I am hoping that "The Brothers Karamazov" may come this week, as I find that volume a good sermon to run through at this season of the year.

One of Celeste's friends in town, a Mrs. Millspaugh whom I have but twice met, sent me an elegant big black chocolate cake today, and as it approaches the hour for Des "Gines to turn on the Piano Quartet, I am about to plunge through a shower, cut myself a couple of slabs of cake, round up a bumper glass of cold milk, and so flatten out, -- after one goodnight look at my gay carillons.....

4576

King Solomon
Mrs. Holloway
1/17/50

4576

Monday, December 18th, 1950.

Memorandum: It was a lovely sunrise this morning, with much ozone in the air and the thermometer at 31 as I headed up Arenbourg way. But it must have been ever so much colder, -- or hotter, -- next door and over the fence, for the butaine tank serving that residence ran out of gas during the night and I reckon the ensuing wailing must have been impressive.

I guess the Post Office Department must have experienced a frost, too, for the postman traveled mighty light today. I don't know why I assumed the annual flood of Christmas cards would start spilling over the dam this early but there was a paucity even of that element. One thing is certain, no postman's back will bend by any load of holiday cards sent out by me. Selfishly enough, I seem to like receiving them but somehow never get around to send any. In fact it just occurs to me this year that there is a definite parallel between the exceedingly plain sheets of paper I send out and those famous "garments" which, according to the old children's tale, were supposed to have been fashioned for some potentate, - how was the title of the story, - "The Emperor's New Clothers" or some such. In both instances, a heap of imagination seems required to conjure up anything that suggests anything approaching tinsel.

With all the talk these days about the Chinese delegation at the Waldorf, I frequently find myself trying to recall another old children's jingle that used to run something like this:

"There lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore,
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him.
"He mused upon this curious case
And said he'd change the pigtails' place,
And have it hanging at his face,
Not dangling there behind him."

"So 'round and 'round and out and in,
All day this puzzled sage did spin,
But still it mattered not a pin, -
The pigtail hung behind him."

4577

4577

Really, you know, it seems to me I ought to be proud to demonstrate thus how profound my thoughts are as we head down the home stretch toward the holidays. And oddly enough I haven't uncorked a sniff of "schnooze" in anticipation of impending festivities, but the tenor of my subject matter must certainly suggest some indulgence.

But my guess is that this memo will reach your true hand either on Saturday, the 23rd or Tuesday, the 26th, and in either case the impending or depending activities of the week end will be such that ponderous profundities will scarcely be in order from this quarter.

Celeste tells me there is a new book out, - "Grand Bouquet" or some such, by somebody named Stahl, published in Los Angeles, of all places, and is a novel about Natchitoches. She seems to know said Stahl who lives at Robeline or some such place, a few miles west of Natchitoches in the hill billy section. She says he is very nice and Eugene says when he knew him before the war he was very roustabout which gives me a very hazy concept of the gentleman, since the opinion of either cuts scant ice in my pond. From what I hear of the book, it seems to be one of those things I frown mightily on, - a novel that tosses in the names of real people as a kind of filler for the stage on which the fictional character perform. As I understand it, in the presence instance, the characters will be up to something or other, and "then when we were down with J. A. and Celeste Henry on their plantation" and so on and so forth. This puts me in mind of my stupidity in once having read something by Arthur Train about a New York lawyer who entertained people I had known or known about, and dunced me, I read the thing, thinking it a biography whereas in reality it was pure fiction.

All in all, Herr Stahl and his book occupy a curious jumble in my mind at present, - nice and roustabout, Los Angeles and Natchitoches, fiction and fact, and I'm curious to see the gentleman and hope he doesn't come by to honor me.

I caught up with Des Moines and the Piano Quartet last night and particularly liked the Mendleson item. The Bach Fugue was pleasant, too, and although I wasn't much impressed by the balance, being unfamiliar with it, still I frankly don't care much what their program embraces, it is such a pleasure to hear them scamper up and down the keyboard with such adroitness and artistry. I should like to hear them do Tchaikovsky's Dance of the Flowers or Waltz of the Flowers or whatever that tuneful ditty is called. Their perfect synchronization ought to make it splendid.

And so, for the moment, I fold, hoping the impending or depending holiday doings may hold a heap of happiness for you!....

4578

collection of Chapel

Aut house
Kleiser vs. L
Lucy Morgan's
letter 12/15

use 5 sons (sons) 7 sons
sunken garden picture not sent

excellent idea about use of photos, Lyle at gate for his article and with goats in diary and also Chrles with madan for diary. all excellent suggestions but feel free to alter if you please

filing idea with notation on Memos excellent

use of Little King with Elephant Bar in Dormon article excellent

running short of pictorial sketch or map of Melrose (end paper one) a few more would be handy

Tuesday, December 19th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Forgive the hodge-podge above, but I have jotted the things down in response to your letters of Wednesday and Saturday last past while a secretary was to hand, thinking this concentration of responses to questions might be the easier handled in this fashion for you, and at the same time guaranteeing that I would not forget half a dozen of them when getting through with the avalanche of other mail that cascaded in upon me.

And while I think of it, I want to say how glad I am that you, too, heard the Edward Murrow radio hour. I heard it, too, and naturally was thinking of you every second. Isn't it a splendid program and how nice to know we were sharing it.

I'm so glad you liked Caroline Dormon's article, for I liked it, too, and thank you much for providing me with a transcript.

And that reminds me of another question you asked which was not answered above. I agree heartily with you that the "club house" should be altered to some standard word, such as "Lyle's residence" or perhaps "Yucca", as that name will be established in the reader's mind by the time it is encountered in that article; or perhaps "the home Lyle occupies" or any such word or group of words. I have always marveled that Lyle seemed so indifferent about one of the most interesting buildings on the place, but so it was. Jokingly he and the Madam sometimes referred to Yucca as "the club house" at such a time as mulatto nobility were invited to view Grandpere's picture or some such. I always suspected Lyle conjured up the word in the beginning to break down any possible latent eye-brow raising by local white people, so that the impression would be made that the gathering wasn't so much in a home as in a semi-public gathering place, but such details have no place in our book and what was a utilitarian catchword required for the moment should not have been incorporated in the newspaper article, of course.

4579

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The Kleisers came this morning a little after 10, and although they had hoped to spend the day, found that some engagements required them to be back in town by 2. And so they spent the morning with me, dined across the fence and so departed. They are charming people and altogether on our side.

I think they astonished, and perhaps pleased their dinner host and hostess by saying there was just one picture they felt impelled to paint while in Louisiana and asked if they might come back on January 2nd to begin the study in oils. Everybody thought the big house or the African house was what they had in mind, but it turned out it was the Chapel of the Blessed Martin. Before leaving, - and they were behind schedule, they asked if they might have just one quick look at the place again to confirm the impression they had had some time last summer, - the only time they had seen it. They said they found it more than a Chapel but something in the nature of a pivotal point around which more than formal religion swung. And so they looked and so they emerged, declaring they were more enchanted not only with the place but what it stood for, even more than their initial visit had led them to believe. And so they will return on January 2nd to do an oil of the place, and I have promised that some of the negro worshipers will pass this way to grace the Chapel and add an extra splash of ebony to the pink walls and the white accoutrements.

You ask about the location of the new banana planting at Arenbourg. They are at the axis formed by the juncture of the drive from the Bermuda Road where it meets the driver from the Alphonse gate, the latter running North-South, you will recall, and the former East West. The soil is very rich there and they will provide a lavish fountain of green vegetation as one looks down either or each allée formed by the fruit trees bordering the drives. I am hoping they will look ever so nice.

Your wish that the weather might favor such doings has been realized, for today it got delightfully warm in the afternoon, and this was terribly important to me, and I'll tell you why. This morning came a flat package from Lydia but by some miracle of self control, plus the fact that the Kleisers were here in the morning and Little King in the evening, - just home on furlough from Maryland, and thus I awaited until the moon had flooded the white garden. I cannot tell you how wonderful it was, and just by chance Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata began first, marvelously fusing with God's over Cane River. And then came Mozart's 12th which was never rendered under happier circumstances. My aunt was forever reciting the legend that Mozart conceived it at Petit Trion in 1778 where he was supposed to have been admitted by Marie Antoinette, his same age, during his Paris visit when the Queen, formerly having seen him as a child, invited him to Trianon where in the late 1770's she was spending so much time. Be that as it may, I love the record, and I shall never feel alone as the tinkle of Mr. Morowitz's rendition on the back gallery brings so close one who means all that is best to me.....

4580

Hastings House 7 sons
4580 1 daughter
Charles Chazurette
Robina 17/15
12/18

Wednesday, December 20th, 1950.

Memorandum:

First off, while I think of it, I would apologize for an error in yesterday's top-page notations. We should, I think, give the Madam 7 sons and 1 daughter. That is on the assumption the children are not named but merely lumped into a number. Yesterday I forgot Erwin who died, and Robert is still in the asylum.

And secondly, while I think of it, I think we should say in regard to Lyle's article about Melrose, something along this line:-

When the present century was moving from its late teens into the early 1920's, Lyle Saxon, then a feature writer on the New Orleans Times Picayune, made his first visit to Aunt Cammie and Melrose. Here are his first impressions of the lady and the place, as published immediately after: " (then let the article follow.

In today's post came two notes, as of the 15th, referring to the Dormon article, and as the latter has already arrived, I shall start off by saying how I laughed when I read your lines about Miss Dormon being a bag for having had me spending my time galloping up and down the paths of the Melrose gardens from dawn to dusk. But you are perfectly right as to that phrase showing how little she understands about the local set up, and is too hard headed to pay any attention to what I have to tell her about how wrong she is in wringing her hands before the "in-laws" and giving them more ammunition in their campaign to scuttle the place which they lack both the intelligence and culture to comprehend.

By the way, Miss Dormon's address is

Caroline Dormon,
Briarwood,
Saline, Louisiana.

Briarwood is the name of her property, while Saline is the name of the nearest Post Office.

I must congratulate you, too, on the adroitness in which you fixed up the paragraph in question, and thanks to your artistry, it now seems to run along ~~smoothly~~ smoothly enough.

..... To be quite fair to Caroline, she is so wrapped up in her

4581

plant business that she never has actually seen the Melrose you and I know, carries nothing about its history, and is a little resentful the matter of color should ever be mentioned in connection with the place, I think, and disapproves, I believe, of the portraits gracing Yucca. It must be said that Miss Dormon is exceedingly kind to birds and animals and negroes, but, so far as she is concerned, I think, all three are in the same class, worthy of one's kindness but not to be classed as human beings.

A copy of Mr. Latham's letter to you reached me in today's post. It appears the initial approach was alright. If it turns out, as Helen's quotation from the Dallas number regarding Macmillan's lack of interest in such a piece, I suppose Harper or Hastings House should be next on our list. In view of past performances of a personal nature, perhaps the Hastings would be the easiest nut to crack; but we shall see. It has always been my understanding that the Nola Vance opus made money for Hastings. I wouldn't know about the Gilmore item, but when it comes time to tap on the Hastings door, we shall not, at least, be unknown.

I wonder if you had the luck to hear little Miss Bankhead on Bob Hope's show read "My country, 'tis of thee", - and if you, did, you found it as inspiring as did I. In the Fibber McGee show, I liked the rendition to music of "'Twas the night before Christmas", - a seasonal poem I have always liked but never heard before with a musical accompaniment.

From talk and from various other reaction coming to hand following the Dewey speech, I conclude that gentleman did the country a distinct dis-service for it appears everyone listening, including myself, got the impression Mr. Dewey was pointing out to us that old Uncle Joe might be hiding behind every door, ready to spring out on us. I think that was an over statement, and what is more, I am inclined to think Uncle Joe hasn't any atom bombs up his sleeve either. Had he had any, I think, he would already have loaned a couple to the "volunteer" Chinese armies, and my guess is that Uncle Joe while anxious to push people around as much as he can, hasn't the slightest intention of opening the way for an "over ripe egg" on his own dome! Surely, if things look as frightening as Mr. Dewey pointed out in his scare speech, then in that same speech he should have chided on certain Congressmen, including Senator Taft, to stop attempting assassination of the character of the Secretary of State, for were Uncle Joe actually hiding behind the door, it would be no time to try scuttling the Administration through such a high official as atchinson who, so far as I know, has always been alright.

But if the political boys are just having fun, slinging custard pies at each other, and I hope that was what the last week business was mostly concerned with, I, personally, will drown them out, for thanks to the Reading Machine I nightly can have Mozart and Beethoven and whoever wants Dewey and Uncle Joe can have them.....

4582

4582

Macmillan
re: *Obituary* (over)

Thursday, December 21st, 1950.

Memorandum:

May I tell you that little old Panache is sitting here slap under the pine cones suspended from my desk lamp, and that none of Rojankovski's children ever looked more gay and transmitted the same sensation to me more completely.

And so, as Panache's presence indicates, your thoughtful air mail arrived this morning. It goes without saying that not only do I love every bristle in Panache's sleek fur coat, but every word in your accompanying message.

One of my secretaries arrived just two minutes before the Knipmeyers, and so I let them entertain themselves in the drawing room while Murrell and I, behind closed double doors, skipped through your grand letter. It is possible Mr. Brew may pass this way later tonight, but I am not waiting for a second reading before chatting with you.

It was so kind of you to give me the details of your appointment at Macmillan's, and I take it you were favorably impressed by Mr. Latham. It must be allowed that as a rule publishers of that stamp are almost invariably pleasant and I am glad it proved so in the present instance.

And although the pressure of time must have been an enervating element, still you may find some compensation during the holidays that momentarily, at least, someone else is having to struggle with the business, thus giving you a much deserved opportunity to forget "the child" temporarily.

When Hastings House is eventually encountered, I think you will find Walter "razee pleasant, too, only let us hope there will be a restful interlude during the Macmillan examination so that you may have just a little chance to catch your breath.

I am only hoping the "excuse" cold has not in reality progressed in the wrong direction and that by now it may be all gone. And at the same time, I hope your belated arrival at the office, following the lower 5th Avenue excursion, did not find too many long faces and too much work piled up as a consequence of your absence. It is impossible for me to tell you how noble I think you are to have engineered all this business slap at the busiest time of the whole year, and I am

4583

4583

holding the thought that what with all the other demands, domestic and business, it hasn't been too much for you. Please, please give a thought to yourself sometimes, for all the books on earth don't amount to a pinch of bug dust as compared with your own good health.

I subscribe wholeheartedly to your treatment of the obituary in fixing up the one version by transposing from the other to make it jibe properly. So far as the newspaper from which it is taken goes, it doesn't make a particle of difference how the matter is handled.

I hope you may be able to contact the same young man with whom you spoke when the manuscript is returned, for it is possible he may have some valuable suggestions to make or some reasons for rejection. It seems to me it is extremely difficult for those of us living so close to a thing to hope to get a detached viewpoint, and thus we often skim over or totally omit all reference to one salient element or other that may be imperative for the casual reader's understanding of the business at hand.

Somehow I am especially delighted to learn that the sea-faring man will be able to spend this Christmas season at home. It is by such evidences as these that the full import of the new world in which we find ourselves comes into our consciousness, it seems to me. For while all of us have known all about the cutting down of time as between here and there, it awaits some example such as this to bring home the possible blessings of speed when employed for the happiness of so many. My own Christmas will be the happier because you told me of this episode, for when one realizes the tremendous happiness it must mean to others, one's own happiness cannot help but glow the brighter.

Pat came home at supper time to spend his Christmas vacation here. He said he was at the General's house last night and that Junior had already arrived, so the General will probably not come to Melrose for Christmas, which is perhaps just as well for our plans in la bataille de la Bibliotheque. Pat knew nothing of the business, and so I laid down my next barrage in that direction, both for his consideration and with the request, when I saw he was on our side, that he use his good offices on Joe when he arrives on Sunday. I might add that as a Christmas greeting, I sent the General an air photo, with some reference to the "adam's love for the place. But don't let me deceive you or me, for come to think of it, it wasn't as a Christmas greeting, although in that guise, but merely subtle propaganda in the battle being waged. But it is time for me to break off, I see. Panache is so nice, - not to mention Lydia.....

4584

4584

this should be dated the 22nd and not as below.

request to speak at College.

Friday, December 23rd, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to find your lovely Noel card by air in today's post, and now nice to know all memoranda and items of bulkier nature have reached your true hand.

It is so much like you to be so thoughtful, and my only hope now is that from here on out until Christmas has passed, you may find one or two little moments to just do nothing but relax.

The more I think of the adroitness with which you handled the Macmillan appointment, the more masterful I think your execution of the time element. If Mr. Hart will only give us some of his own ideas regarding the manuscript, how helpful it is likely to prove.

Today's mail was fairly heavy again but made up primarily of cards from various quarters, including many a name I don't recognize, - probably pilgrims in some cases who were forgotten before they got well beyond the front gate. But it is nice to know they remembered their visit.

Among today's visitors were a couple delegated to petition me to speak at the college early in January. Whatever the conclave is about, I am uncertain, as I had two sets of people going at the same time, - one inside and one on the back gallery, and I didn't ask details. They explained that it is the custom to cast about Louisiana or Texas to secure someone of distinction to deliver the address, but they didn't explain what had happened this year that their custom had been altered and they had turned to me. I wouldn't give them a definite answer before early next week, and in the mean time I may see somebody from the college, - perhaps Dr. Coombs or Dr. Kyser or some such, and shall then determine if my response will be affirmative or negative.

A little note on a Christmas card from Nina demonstrates that I must have been talking through my hat in a letter to her a month ago, or possibly the doings in Corpus Christi where she now finds herself has her in such a tizzy she misread my letter, for in the note she expresses her condolence over the death, - not of Grandpere, - but of Clemence, saying how gifted she always felt she was, etc. Isn't that a sight.

1284

4585

In your last letter you mentioned your inability to find candles for the Chapel but you will be glad to know that the lovely white Christmas tree candles of a former Noel are still mighty in their potential light giving flames, and they will grace each end of the altar on Christmas Eve, with the taller tapers in the wrought iron candleabras towering above them. I put aside the taller tapers during the summer so the heat would not wilt them, and when cooler days came in October, I returned them to their original position, so that both they and the Christmas tree once will unite their forces tomorrow night and Christmas night and on New Year's eve as well.

The Chapel looks unusually lovely tonight for the waxing moon is rising over far off Little River and its oblique rays shimmer with unusual mellowness through the stained glass from the top point down three quarters of the way where the intervening pointed roof line of the African House, between the Chapel and the moon add a second geometrical design of darkness that is weird and lovely.

Last night I listened to my favorite Christmas story, - "Miracle on 34th Street", and although the script seems to be slightly altered each year and even though Margaret O'Brian didn't have the juvenile part, I still found it my favorite radio play. Afterwards I had a little mid-night supper all by myself, - some crackers and Roquefort which Rudolph had sent some little sausages one of my negro friends had brought me and a can of chocolate malted milk, iced. When I was done, I plunged through a quick shower, drew back the portieres on the White Garden side and with only the moon to light the scene, listened for an hour to Beethoven and Mozart. In the midst of the first go-round of the 12th Sonata, I noticed a cotton tail frolic half way between the gallery and the sun dial, - the rabbit's tail and the column of the sun dial seeming so bright in the moonlight. The first rabbit was joined by a second and smaller one, hopping about over the Giant's head and stopping occasionally to point their ears skyward. I don't know if this was their first acquaintance with Mozart, but be that as it may, they seemed to respond to it with delight. Abruptly they scampered and a minute later the bamboo parted and the "ark" uke crossed the garden. He said he had heard some pretty tinklin' music and thought he would come and listen for a while, thinking he would sit on the gallery without "worryin'" me, for I suppose he had assumed the portieres would be drawn. And so he finished the little sausages and a glass of wine and he seemed fascinated by the "tinklin'". Thanks to various circumstances but most of all to you, it was a lovely evening

1284

4586

Sunday, Christmas Eve, 1950.

Memorandum:

And so here we are, after a cloudless, warm, summer-like day, with a full moon rising behind the African House, equaling the light on both sides of the stained glass window in the Chapel where the tall white tapers and the squat Christmas tree candles are all aglow.

Thanks to you, it has been such a lovely Christmas eve. About an hour ago, after all the hubub of the day had vanished, I opened all your Christmas gifts, and each has delighted me more than the preceding. I was alone in the living room sitting in front of the fireplace where the double sets of carillon lent enchantment to the dark recesses of the chimney and its heavily banked cavern of dark green magnolia leaves. First off, I suspended all operations to hang the gay gold bell in the fat envelope just at the center pane of the window along side my desk and immediately above the aquarium, so that every time I glance toward the sun dial, splashed in moonlight, I see it through the frame of the big Liberty number. I'm crazy about it, and I know full well it is going to excite all kinds of interest, - and, I fear, a desire to fiddle with it, on the part of many of my colored callers on the morrow.

Next I opened the flat handkerchief box and I shall bless you more than once for that timely gift, for I had somehow run low on that item, and one of these will be so gay the next time I make a public appearance in my "Sunday clothes". The coloring of the design of all is so perfect that it will harmonize nicely with any color suit I may chance to get rigged up in, be it blue or gray or brown, but in the initial instance I think I shall wear a gray with a faint blue stripe, for I seem to have inherited a flock of such lately.

And at this moment I pause to sample another Nestle's Crunch which have been sampled so often during the past hour, for that box I opened next and was altogether delighted, for as you know, chocolate is my favorite flavor, and while, in line with your suggestion on the wrapping, I may share a nibble or two with friends, I don't mind confessing that these are so very special, one will grace my night table every time I get around to folding up for the day, and I shall absorb Nestle's and radio programs all at the same sitting, with thoughts naturally concentrating, as usual, in a very particular direction. I declined a high ball at Celeste's where I dined today, and haven't had a sip of wine in days, so that my impulse to consume candy is beyond repression, and I must pause for another bite as I turn this page.

4587

The marvelous scarf came next, together with the lovely card dominated by little colored angels. To me, both are so delightful to contemplate, I think I shall just keep them both for a while so that on dark days, I can draw them from the armoire and thus discover sunshine spilling all over the place at their appearance.

As for the cigarettes, I have one of the packs in my pocket right now and don't intend lighting it for another half hour yet, at which time I am repairing to the back gallery where the reading machine is already awaiting me. There, as Mr. Howitz fills the White Garden with the tinkle of his Mozart's 12th and Herr von Beet oven's moonlight, I shall light my first cigarette as my gaze travels from the moonlit garden to the taper lighted Chapel and back again perhaps a Nestle's Cruch or two along side, just to make everything complete. And completeness will be even more impressive because I shall be wearing, as I am right now, the elegant shirtpardon me,I just dropped a piece of Crunch on to the bank where rest the little hammers one which the individual letters are attached.....the shirt is so elegant, and fits so perfectly. I love the material, the cut, the color and its short shirt-tail, and not the least, the double buttons on the cuffs, so that, when I go out to spend a pleasant half hour or so on the gallery, I can wear the sleeves buttoned tight or loose, as the night air seems to recommend.

If your Christmas Eve has had but half the quiet and happiness that have been mine, then you, too, at this moment, are as filled with gratitude to God that His blessings have been so rich and that by having given, as to me, one friend who means everything, then He is to be blessed forever and forever.

As for yesterday, the weather was much like today and a few people, of both races, passing this way to make things pleasant. Mrs. Doombs dropped by for a moment in the morning to drop a little gift, - after shaving lotion, and then to breeze on, her car heavily laden with Christmas toys for poor children scattered along Little River, and particularly to the home of 4 children whose mama died yesterday. At 11, Eli (Edith Mahiers) came by on her way from Norman, Oklahoma to Baton Rouge. She had Miss Hoover with her, some kin of Herbert's, - niece or some such, and it was good to see both ladies who staid to dinner. Eli said she seldom sees Mr. Pipes but that he seems to like his work which has to do with films at the University, but I know not what.

The Joe Henrys came from Texas along about first dark and came over to get me, after a little chat, to have a highball at Celeste's. I like them both, and what with Pat here, too; it was all very pleasant.

But I notice it is time for me to be-take myself to mein lieber Wolfgang, and that means somebody else in spirit, somebody who has made my Christmas so happy.....

4588

Christmas Night, 1950.

Memorandum:

The thermometer didn't harmonize with the date line. All day the sun shone bright and it was so warm sitting on the gallery was ever so pleasant. It is cooler now that the moon is up but still amply warm enough for me to enjoy an open air musical a little later.

I breakfasted with Joe and Juanita for perhaps an hour or so. It was all very pleasant, and on finishing we all laughed at our concerted efforts to sell Melrose to each other, what with all three of us having always been so thoroughly sold on the place.

The Wenks came at 11, and everything was gushing in the love department, only they knowing how genuine it might be, but to an innocent bystander like myself it all seemed ridiculously overplayed. A Christmas tree at Celeste's at 11, and dinner at noon. An hour's talk with Sister after dinner and they returned to Shreveport. Supper at the big house and rather unpleasant, Dan being high and determined to be unhappy and to make everyone just as much so as possible. Joe walked as far as my gate with me just as the moon was rising. He had many kind things to say to me, and from what points he touched on, I gathered there had been a discussion about the library, and that he and J. H. are determined nothing is going to be moved.

During their stay the Wenk children were busy in the gardens, - Lloyd, 11, and John 9, and both of them receiving from their parents a 22 rifle for each. Shreveport has a law against permitting children to have fire arms. I think a rifle for a 9 year old is dangerous business. There was much cannonading but they only killed a few robins.

Irma Somperyac Willard and Miss Judie Prudhomme, Lestan's niece, came to see me this afternoon. Just as they arrived, a message came from Little King, inviting me to his wedding to take place within the hour at Fony's and Selma's, next house adjoining the Rand camp. No others outside the families of the bride and groom were invited and I was sorry, in a way, I couldn't get away. It is interesting when after a two year period of "companionate marriage" during which two daughters have been begotten that a legal marriage should be consummated. Little King, I believe, returns to Maryland on Thursday.

This noon a telephone call was put through to Baton Rouge to give everyone here an opportunity to chat with the S. G.'s - seniors and juniors. But only the wife of Junior chanced to be at home as the rest of the family were attending a funeral. It was one of the Melness boys, about Pat's age. I think he is or was an L. S. U. student. I have no particulars about his death.

4589

He is the eldest son of Nina's husband by his previous marriage.
What a Christmas for that family.

As invariably happens at this bend of the river, everybody I expected to come to see me did not appear, and everyone I didn't, did. I sometimes think that as in Humor, so Christmas, if successful, is bound to have a telling element of surprise in it, and while most of the colored friends passing this way were of long standing, they just chanced to be ones I hadn't seen in quite a while, so we all had much to talk about, getting caught up on much long neglected gossip.

Last night's radion mentioned holiday deaths at the rate of 5 per hour, but as up to now I haven't heard of the Grim Reaper appearing along this stretch of the river. About 3 o'clock this morning on the road just this side of the spillway a car turned over three times, and late today it was still resting on it top and its four wheels high in the air, but somehow or other none of the Red River occupants were scratched.

As for myself, it has been one of the pleasantest Christmas days I can remember. The inevitable gathers haven't been prolonged and can be disposed of as those necessary requirements which are the better if discharged with all possible dispatch, with the balance of the day left for real Christmas spirit. I wonder, and yet I have no doubt that you can understand my feelings when I say to you that in spite of the pretty presents coming my way they all seemed incidental and by the way, following my own little Christmas party last night. It seems rather odd to me as I turn the matter over in my mind, and yet in all truth I must confess to you that after opening Lydia's gifts, all my sensations had reached the saturation point and it was they that matter, and everything coming after them, either last night or today, while pretty, somehow just didn't seem to count.

It goes without saying that I wore my new shirt which goes so nicely with kaki trousers and it felt so good for in such an instance it is impossible to separate the gift from the giver. And it was nice, each puff of my own cigarettes, and for the identical reason. And this morning while sipping my coffee, it was equally pleasant to let the toast and bacon and eggs go bye, for I had already sampled another "estle's at dawning and I knew I hould want another before noon so that coffee would be all I wanted to get the day going.

I cannot help pondering on this attitude and after wondering what is wrong with me, coming to the conclusion of most simple minded people that I couldn't possibly be wrong in this particular matter. For reduced to the essentials involved, I guess it comes down to the fact that we are inclined to feel that whatever comes to us as from the heart of another outweighs everything else in the world that may come from all others, many of whom we may love, but since that degree of affection cannot be measured in terms of the other, nothing from the others can possible ever mean so much as that from the particular one.....

4590

Tuesday, December 26th, 1950.

Memorandum:

How nice to have your air mail Currier and Ives in this morning's post.

I am so glad everything to through alright and that you found it alright. After I had shipped the package, it occurred to me you might be prepared, on receipt, to open up a cotton exchange of your own, but I hope the stuff could somehow be absorbed into a convenience disposal unit without too much excitement. For years that bale of yellow cotton has been "worrisome" but two more shipments, and I guess it will be just about non-existent.

The mails continue rather heavy and there seem to be flocks of be-lated Christmas cards coming from expected and unexpected quarters. I was glad to have a line from the Hills in Hong Kong, for I think they have been under the impression I have had their Asiatic address which I haven't, and so have felt a little cut off from them. It just occurred to me as I made out an envelope, on receipt of theirs, that there was nothing on their return address, save "Hong Kong", and I suddenly wondered if that place is currently considered a part of China, or is it completely British, or what. Isn't it odd how things like that rock along for years without one giving it a thought until some such occasion to use the name arises.

Today's pilgrims included some people from Denver, - not the Carrolls who came a month or so ago, but some other people whose names I don't recall at the moment. It isn't quite clear to me, either, just how they got the idea, sitting off in Colorado, that they ought to pass this way but such seemed to be the case. They were interested in two major concerns, - one was to see this place and the other was to get me to do something about saving from destruction some of the few, early granite made mansions of the early mining millionaires of that city. It seems they are threatened with annihilation by the more "progressive" elements in the Denver Chamber of Commerce, and somebody directed them to take up the matter with me.

Just how I got mixed up in the business isn't clear as yet, but I shall probably eventually find out. In the mean time I shall take a few shots in the direction of the "ookies and see what reverberations are forthcoming. Of course

0021

4591

the Denver mansions are comparatively new so far as your point of view and mine are concerned, for none of these old homes are probably much more than 65 or 70 years. And it must be admitted that they were built when the world was at one of its most lamentable low ebbs architecturally speaking when the great Silver Kings of the 1870's and 1880's were intent in squandering fortunes on jim-crack residences in granite, more or less imitating Carpentry Gothic.

And yet it seems to me these buildings, although pretty hideous architecturally, merit preservation as monuments to the way of life that flourished in such a florid manner when Denver came into being, and I shall try to do something about it, eventually.

If memory serves me, Gunther in his "Inside U. S. A." says the Denver press isn't on too high a level, but I shall be able to get somebody to put me in touch with some Edith Wyatt Moore of the Rockies, and I shall send her a pattern to follow in writing up the old homes, together with much doings about the families of the builders, and eventually through such a medium, and a bit of drum-beating on other fronts, may eventually stave off the use of the pick axe.

Perhaps you had an opportunity to hear the Bob Hope show with Big Crosby as guest. I don't know as it was particularly hilarious but I found in it that nicety of balance between the serious and the gay that made it unusually inspiring. Sometimes I am inclined to think that the best sermons are not those droned out in a cathedral, bogged down with vast and serious profundities, but rather are they those little paragraphs, pearls of wisdom, that are seemingly tossed in without intention between the laughing lines of the radio comedians, and all the better entertainers seem to be those whose scrip contains the solid bits along with the lighter stuff.

Somebody once remarked about the difference between Melrose and Natchez tours as stemming from the fact that in Natchez they got an ante bellum charade only. Well, from where I sit, they don't get many hoop skirts paraded before their unimaginative minds. But all such questions are for others to solve, but there must be some parallel between mirth and the serious aspects of life, and if they can discover it in George pushing down a fence to come to grace my gallery, that is fine, and I shall be glad to receive instruction.

But the hour grows late and I have a couple of things to do before I call it a day, and begin reading one page from my favorite novel before going to bed. For The Brothers Karamazov came today, and although belatedly, I shall still read about them for my preferred Christmas sermon.....

0021

Noel Frances Lee General
Postell 17/20/50 4592

Wednesday, December 27th, 1950.

Memorandum:

It's bitter, after all our summer weather, for a breeze came out of the East during the night and all day the thermometer hovered around 32 and tonight it will go down into the 20's.

And from all this, you may imagine I was up and abroad at an early hour, putting some extra duds on the Arenbourg "children", for while their "footsies" are cosey enough in their cotton hull bedding, their arms might get a little chilled, and so I was as busy as a chicken on a hot griddle for a while this morning.

The holiday continues, so far as non-occupational pursuits go on the plantation, for nobody wants to labor out of doors in obtaining temperatures.

When I got back to Yucca I found Beau, Log, Puny, Peter and Little King awaiting my coming. It was good to see them all and to hear how things turned on Christmas. Little King could only stay a few minutes as he had to catch a plane to fly him back to Maryland, but it was pleasant all the boys could be together for a nip of belated Christmas wine and cookies.

I missed Lowell Thomas tonight but I did hear a five minute news cast which gave the name of the new Ambassador to Spain. I had intended asking you if you recall the name of the actress who figured in Mr. Griffith's yachting parties in the 1930's. She was a big girl, as I recall, verging on the Ethel Merman type, and I have heard her on the radio a few times, the last time in the role of Becky Sharp in Vanity Fair, but her name eludes me. It is sheer idle curiosity that impells me to want to recall her name, but if I ever do or not matters not a whit.

I remember her apartment on the South West corner of 5th Avenue and was it 11th Street, - the North West corner or the whole block being occupied by that nice dingey old stone church, - an Episcopal one, as I recall. It's so odd the name of that bag has eluded me.

But in speaking of one actress recalls the favorable

4593

comment: I have stumbled over on the air about Anne Harding in the new film about Justice W. W. Holmes, - something about some kind of a Yankee, but the exact title eludes me, too. I suppose the premiere will be given shortly, or perhaps the picture has already been released, and I know with what anticipation you must be looking forward to seeing it, and particularly little Miss Harding

And being in such a forgetful mood, I don't even recall the title of Katherine Drinker Bowen's biography of Justice Holmes, - "Yankee from Mount Olympus" or some such, but I recall how Mrs. Justice Holmes flitted through that delightful book, and especially the paragraph describing how Madam Holmes in later years had all evening gowns, cut with low neck lines, so rigged up with whale bone and netting, so that she must have been something of a sight when appearing at formal functions.

I am wondering whatever happen to Mrs. Bowen and the biography she was doing of old John Adams. I haven't heard anything about that lady's efforts since her letter referring to the Adams biography, and I am wondering if she ever finished it, or if, perhaps, it went stale on her hands. For the life of me I could never imagine how she could ever breathe life into such a character who somehow always impressed me as having had scant warmth while alive, for surely in all American history, nobody was ever quite so low temperatured as both old John and his son, John Quincy.

How pleasant it is to chat with you as usual at this hour while across the fence the gentry of the Lower Coast are sipping egg-nog and fruit cake and chattering like a nest of magpies. I guess the nicest part about it is that they all are having a wonderful time and I am "bien tickle" to be thus able to settle affairs of the world on the old Underwood, after which, in lieu of egg-nog, I shall have a round of chocolate milke and a slab of fruit cake while Alexander Scooby will take over to read me a page or two from the Dostievski Opus. Celeste did her best this morning to get me to promise I would break my custom and attend the function, which was certainly kind of her, while at supper tonight Joe and Juanita tried their hand at the business but didn't get to first base, but we had fun in the tug of war which came to nothing. But there will be so many people present, I shall never be missed, but at the same time I know that Herr Scooby and Herr Mozart would both be terribly up-set, if I weren't here to commune a bit with both. Don't you think so.

And so, for this sitting, I fold up my beard. It's been nice chatting, and I shall feel the happier because in playing the 12th Sonata, I shall not seem to be alone at all.....

4594

Mrs. Lake Xmas
1950.

Thursday, December 28th, 1950.

Memorandum:

Fortunately the post was scarce today, giving me an opportunity to catch up on some of the stacks of cards and notes coming to hand during the holidays.

The enclosure from Madam Lake held something of a surprise, since I had never dreamed she would slap personal correspondence into print without a "by your leave". It is quite true that what she quoted was obviously from my pen, but the preface was a bit on the hilarious side, as I think you will readily agree.

And, if you don't mind my inclination to point out such an obvious truth, the article just goes to show that whatever impression is created in the daily press, scant credence can be placed on the printed word.

It is pleasant to report that the thermometer began rising around 10 o'clock this morning and the promise of a low of 40 for tonight impelled me to remove the garments from the Arenbourg children a few hours earlier. The sheets and pillow cases I had used to enshroud them were enchanting objects when I removed them, for the thin coating of ice, - it had drizzled a little early last night, had converted the sheets into huge balloon-shaped objects while the pillow cases looked like something out of the wardrobe of a Ku Klux member. The thermometer never got above 45 all day, what with a heavy cloud coverage, but again tonight the weather man assures us it will not vary 5 degrees during the night, and so all is well on the Freeze Front tonight.

The report of last night's party was favorable on all sides except that Pat remained in bed until rather late, and Joe didn't get out of bed until supper time, both of them experiencing up-set stomachs. I reckon it may have been the fresh pork roast we had for supper rather than the egg-nog that followed.

And speaking of egg-nog, I must say I don't care much about the type Celeste usually serves, which is more or less in the nature of a sea foam or froth that "stands on its own feet" and is eaten with a spoon. Personally I like the kind that can be sipped. I used to make them every day in the early 1940's when every afternoon the Madam and I would have a go at the stuff, but perhaps I put too much whiskey in mine or too much cream, but be that as it may, my specialty was the type that poured rather than the type that stood still. I have recently heard that

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4595

a good grade of ice cream well beaten, with the whiskey pour in as the beating is in process makes an excellent egg-nog, but I never tried it. But if it ever fell to me to stir up such a concoction again, I think I should like to try the ice cream idea, for it would certainly save a lot of excitement that always goes along with beating the White separately from the yokes, and after the latter has been beaten, the cream, and then the whole beaten into one great big business as the whiskey is being added.

Mr. McKinney, the new overseer, arrived this afternoon and will take up his residence here forthwith, I suppose. Joe and Juanita will leave tomorrow, if Joe feels equal to the drive to Houston or Conroe and on Saturday the S. G. Henrys will arrive from Baton Rouge for the week end. And speaking of the S. G.'s, the enclosure came to hand only today, although from the cancellation, it was obviously mailed on the 24th. I find no reference to the air shot of Melrose which should have reached their true hand about December 18th. Perhaps the post was delayed in that direction, too. Then, too, since the little S. G.'s were already arrived, perhaps papa was too busy playing Santa to get more than a scrawl into the mails.

In spite of the clammy weather, pilgrims braved the elements but I left word at the Post Office that I could see no one, for Arenbourg had first claims today, and I wanted to see some people on the place this afternoon about giving me a hand to do some things there when the atmosphere and the holidays have altered themselves. Last night I felt noble about confining myself to only a couple of pages of reading, thinking it would be well to flatten out at a respectable hour and do a little radio listing. But the radio was clogged with veritable trash and I finally ended up by listening to some Bible slapper who went to great pains to prove that Christmas should fall in September instead of December since Christ must have been born around Labor Day, which was just about the speed those Kansas bigots usually hit. But I must say I laughed at myself for being just about in their class the other day when in reading Mr. Churchill's "Richard Carvel" I found myself complaining because the author has a character in 1769 remark that the pool on a Maryland estate was after the manner of the little lake at Pet t rianon which, of course, was never dug until the 1780's, - as though 10 or 12 years either way made the slightest difference.

It just occurs to me to ask you if you think the air view of Melrose, reduced (reduced to the size of the pictorial map small ones, would show anything at all. If they or it would, it might be nice to employ the two for propaganda purposes, but if it would merely be a blur with a white smudge where the big house is, it would be useless, of course. Your opinion will set me straight and I shall vastly appreciate your advice. But I see I am getting to the end of this sheet so I had better fold. Little old Panache is bobbing approval, too.....

1232

4596

Friday, December 29th, 1950.
Memorandum:

Cool, damp and cloudy, and the holiday season continues to bring forth the pilgrims in increasing numbers, with many of them, I suppose, heading for a big week end in New Orleans to view the Sugar Bowl game, especially the Texas and Oklahoma sections, and most the (of the) football enthusiasts are bound to be wrong when they include both Melrose and the pig skin players on their agenda, for there isn't really so much relationship, the one with the other.

One such group came under the personal aegis of Miss Tillinghast this afternoon, her mother, her daughter, her uncle and aunt and the pilgrims were more or less bored and those in authority not too entranced. It seemed like rather too vast a concourse for such a guide, it seemed to me, at least, and so it seemed to another, I think.

But some of the passers-by have been pleasant, and migrants from the North, -- the White Throated Sparrows, -- have arrived in force during the past few days. I don't recall having seen so many in years gone by. Perhaps there's so much racket going on at Briarwood in contriving the new house that those usually making their winter home there have honored me.

Be that as it may, a perfectly elegant feeding arrangement has just reached me by post and the White Throats are making the most of it. In the past, it hasn't been easy for me to catch up with the individuals for a close contact, but now that this new feeding arrangement is to hand, at least a half dozen are taking breakfast and dinner from morning to dusk just beyond the window pane here by my desk.

In view of all the packages Uncle Sam has to handle during the rush season, I reckon it is wonderful so few get lost and that no more of them get squeezed. In the present instance, however, all that came to hand was a fine sack of seeds, including sunflower seeds, which the White Throats seem to love, plus the three parts making up the lantern shaped feeder, including the top, the glass globe center and the base, designed to let the seeds feed down into the circular trough. The circular bar for the birds to perch on also accompanied the shipment, but it had been wedged off but not otherwise damaged, and on Tuesday I shall have Napoleon Bonaparte Carter weld the

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circular bar back on again and it will be just as good as when it started out. A battered box which had been obviously tied up by some weary postal clerk between its place of origin and here, plus a label bearing my name, attached to the string, was all that came to hand, and as the package had not been insured, no claim could be made, although, in reality, there was no need for making a claim, for the item was in no way damaged, save for the little circular bar being in need of re-soldering.

And I am glad it arrived thus, for had it carried the bar, I might have hung up the feeder by the circular opening rising above the top, and not have placed it here on the gallery shelf, just beyond my window. As it is now, the White Thorats and I are not more than a foot apart, with only the pane of glass separating us. And by the time Monday has arrived, the birds will be so accustomed to the object that when I hang it from the ceiling just beyond the doors to the Chapel, they will be so accustomed to their jolly new restaurant that they will not be at all hesitant about making endless rounds.

Curiously enough, there is something at once to Chinese and so Early American about the lines of the item and it seems as though expressy made to harmonize with the simple architecture of Yucca and to fit in with the quaint Chinese hats decorating the East wall of the gallery.

I presume the original package may have contained a card, but it must have become lost when the carton was broken up in transit, but actually, of course, no card is needed, for only one person in the whole world could have sent it and that person scarcely needs me to say how entranced I am with the whole thing and how indebted I am for this billion expression of thoughtfulness and kindness for me.

Little or nothing is done on the plantation about New Years, I reckon, in fact, that seasonal work will start on Monday morning. And so the holiday frolic is getting under way tonight, with a big swing-out at the local honkey-tonk and much flying up and down the road. Several of my friends have passed this way en route to the dance, and it was pleasant to share a glass of wine all 'round.

If I can make the hurdle between now and Tuesday without too much interruption, I ought to be into the accustomed, post holiday pace forthwith. One or two gaps in Christmas greetings, as, for example, from the Overdykes, impells me to hazard the guess that they may be passing this way before college begins again. I am hoping you may be having Saturday off and that the succeeding two days may provide a few minutes for you when nothing is required and nothing undertaken, save a bit of rest and relaxation. Do try to be thoughtful to you.....

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New Year's Eve, being Sunday,
December 31st, 1950.

Memorandum:

The New Year is about to begin perfectly, thanks to your grand letters of the 26th and 27th, reaching me on Saturday, and held until this evening.

I am so glad to have particulars regarding your Christmas Day, and I like the candle light dinner which sounds so charming.

I have another air photo of Melrose which I shall put in the out-going mail. I think the General did not receive the one I sent him on the 11th either, and this afternoon J. H. told me a special delivery letter, posted in Baton Rouge on the 20th had reached the Bayou L'atchez Post Office today, so apparently mails are running far behind in some instances whether passing through the pre-Christmas strike zone or not. The more I think about it, the more inclined I am to believe that the air photo may fit in nicely with the other illustrations, and may, - or possibly may not, be the one we shall want to use up in front of the book for a piece I am belatedly doing for that section. The photo will go forward immediately, the article a few days later.

In the original shipment with the air photo was the one of Clemence for which you asked and, if memory serves, some bit of manuscript, although about the latter point I am hazy. In the mean time perhaps the original photo may arrive, but to insure against absence of the air view, I shall send along my extra copy.

The week end has been ever so pleasant. Dan went to the Dallas football game, - scheduled for tomorrow, and the General and lady arrived on Saturday evening. Dinner at the big house today was pleasant all around, with the food excellent and the conversation entertaining. I must pass along one story to you which the General told me, illustrating the exalted opinion General McArthur has of himself. Perhaps the story is an old one for you, but it is new for me, and since I think you might be able to bear it a second time, and probably there are variations, I shall run the risk of boring you with it.

It seems that following the cessation of hostilities, Admiral Nemitz and General McArthur took a much needed vacation, which they spent together in some coastal town in the Philippines. One afternoon they went out alone in a sail boat which foundered or turned over or some such, and the Admiral and General found themselves struggling in the water, for it was difficult to right the boat and Admiral Nemitz couldn't swim. In due time, however, they both

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got the boat righted and were once more safely aboard. General Nemitz remarked that it might be just as well if nothing ever leaked out about the experience, since the newspapers the world over, and the in particular, might make a great noise about the Admiral of the Fleet being almost drowned because of his inability to swim. General McArthur concurred whole heartedly as to silence regarding their experience, saying:

"Most certainly I wouldn't want the military ever to suppose I couldn't walk on the water."

So much for the McArthur Messiah complex.

Wasn't it nice that the telephone conversation from Detroit and Illion suggest that all goes well in those quarters, and how nice to know something about some of the gifts old Santa put in your stocking. I am rather surprised the Congressional Library hasn't done anything about the Churchill Memorial. I think I shall put a bee in their bonnet on that subject, -- whether it produces any results or not. And I am so glad to know about the additional data covering the "G. B. S." volume. That should be entertaining and I think I shall buzz a little on that score, too.

My day has been quite busy, family, pilgrims and friends passing this way. Since 4 this morning I haven't had a minute to myself, and it was only at 11:25 that I found myself alone and could begin this little chat with you. It is nice to think that about the time I have concluded, it will be time for us both to raise a glass to Lydia and Lestan respectively as the little new comer makes it's bow. I had guests at 11 o'clock Central Standard Time, and I withdrew for a few moments to raise my glass. I shall gladly repeat the gesture at 12.

Among today's visitors were Phil Johnson, a negro, and his son, perhaps 13 years old. The latter is the boy so adept in wood carving. They brought some samples, --- all automobiles, the boy had created. As automobiles do not particularly inspire me, I was not especially moved by the items as automobiles, but I must say they were remarkable. Each one was so complete, - perhaps 18 inches in length, with little doors that functioned perfectly, rumble seats, tops and hoods that opened and closed with precision, little engines that seemed perfect reproductions of real ones, and even little batteries that turned on headlights when the proper gadget was touched. The boy was entranced with much he saw here and thinks he can stirrup the African How the sun dial and so on along the lines of the original. He is really a wonderfully gifted child and I shall be so interested to see what he has to bring back when he returns. He lives off on Little River somewhere or other, - a little beyond St. Mary's on the Bayou, I believe. Wont it be fine if his gift takes a turn for re-creating in miniature some of the nicer things hereabout.

But let me start folding up at this point. It has been such a pleasant week end and ending of the current year, - thanks to just one person who radiates everything that is wor